NATION

Brain infection claims one more life in Kerala

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

What's behind Nitin Gadkari's push for E20 petrol?

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Iyer named India's skipper for Australia A series

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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After 'lost to China' jab, Don calls India-US ties 'special'

Trump calls Modi friend again; PM backs positive assessment

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Hours after claiming the US had "lost India and Russia to China," President Donald Trump dialled down his rhetoric, calling India a "special partner" and asserting he would "always be friends" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The reversal followed backlash to Trump's social media post, which featured a photo of Modi with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, captioned: "Looks like we've lost India and Russia to deepest, darkest China. May they have a long and prosperous future together!"

At a White House news conference, Trump said: "India and the United States have a special relationship. There's nothing to worry about." He acknowledged differences, saying, "I just don't like what [Modi] is doing at this particular moment," but did not elaborate.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump met in February *PHOTO: ANI*

PM Modi responded positively on X, posting: "Deeply appreciate and fully reciprocate President Trump's sentiments and positive assessment of our ties. India and the US have a very positive and forward-looking Comprehensive and Global Strategic Partnership."

The comments mark the first direct exchange between the two leaders since a phone call on June 17. Tensions have escalated recently after the US imposed a 50% tariff on Indian goods, a move tied to India's continued import of Russian crude oil. India condemned the tariffs as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable".

Asked about India's energy ties with Moscow, Trump said: "I have been very disappointed that India would be buying so much oil... from Russia." He added, "We put a very big tariff on India, 50 per cent, very high tariff."

Meanwhile, Indian officials dismissed as "inaccurate and misleading" recent comments by Trump ally Peter Navarro, who labelled India a "massive refining hub and oil money laundromat for the Kremlin."

India has stood firm, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stating, "We will have to take a call on what suits us best." *—PTI*

The report follows a June 2024 CSIS assessment that identified Khalistani extremists as a long-standing national security threat *PHOTO: ANI*

Khalistanis got funding from within Canada: Report

OTTAWA, 6 SEPT

A new Canadian government report has confirmed that at least two Khalistani extremist groups, Babbar Khalsa International and the International Sikh Youth Federation, have received financial support originating from Canada.

The findings, published in the 2025 Assessment of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risks in Canada, highlight growing concerns over Politically Motivated Violent Extremism (PMVE), which includes the use of violence to achieve political self-determination.

The report follows a June 2024 Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) assessment that identified Canada-based Khalistani extremists as a long-standing national security threat. The latest report underlines that these groups, while now operating in smaller pockets, continue to solicit funds from diaspora communities, often through misuse of non-profit and charitable organisations.

It also notes that other terrorist entities, including Hamas and Hezbollah, have similarly received funds from Canadian sources. These groups utilise a wide array of methods for financing — including abuse of money service businesses, banks, cryptocurrencies, and state sponsorship.

While the misuse of the non-profit sector is described as a notable method, it is estimated to contribute only a small portion of overall terror group finances. Nevertheless, the report acknowledges that such practices continue to raise security concerns.

The report also reiterates that illegal drug trafficking remains Canada's highest money laundering threat, generating billions in illicit proceeds annually.

These revelations further reinforce India's longstanding position that pro-Khalistani groups are operating freely in Canada, engaging in anti-India activities with impunity. *—PTI*

Macron calls Modi to discuss Ukraine war

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron on Saturday, reaffirming India's support for a peaceful resolution to the Ukraine conflict. The leaders also positively reviewed bilateral cooperation across sectors such as defence, space, science, and technology. Modi reiterated India's consistent call for peace and stability in Ukraine, aligning with recent global efforts, including talks involving US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The two leaders agreed to continue working closely under the Horizon 2047 and Indo-Pacific roadmaps. The conversation follows Modi's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the SCO Summit in Tianjin, where he called for a swift end to hostilities. *—PTI*

Sasikala paid Rs 450 cr to buy sugar factory: CBI

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

VK Sasikala, a close aide of former Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalithaa, had allegedly paid Rs 450 crore in old high-denomination currency notes to buy a sugar factory during demonetisation in 2016, according to an FIR lodged by the CBI. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had registered the case on the Madras High Court's directions against Padmaadevi Sugars Limited (PSL) for allegedly causing a loss of Rs 120 crore to the Indian Overseas Bank. The account was named fraud in 2020. *—PTI*
>>>More on Page 3

UP Amity student slapped '50-60 times' on campus

LUCKNOW, 6 SEPT

Five law students from Amity University's Lucknow campus have been booked following a viral video showing the brutal assault of their classmate, Shikhar Mukesh Kesarwani. The incident, confirmed by senior police officer Dinesh Chandra Mishra, reportedly occurred on 26 August when Shikhar was threatened and abused inside a vehicle by classmates, including Jahnvi Mishra and Ayush Yadav, who allegedly slapped him 50–60 times. His father, Mukesh Kesarwani, stated, "The incident has left my son traumatised; he has stopped attending college." He also claimed that the assailants broke Shikhar's phone and threatened his family. *—Agencies*

TN forms panel to probe Cuddalore gas leak incident

CUDDALORE, 6 SEPT

An investigation has been launched into a gas leak at a chemical manufacturing facility near Cuddalore, which resulted in over 40 people being hospitalised after inhaling toxic fumes. State Minister MRK Panneerselvam announced the formation of a committee from the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health to examine the cause of the incident. On 5 September, 43 individuals experienced symptoms like eye irritation and suffocation, leading to their admission at the Government General Hospital. The leak is believed to have originated from a "steam valve" within the plant. District SP S Jeyakumar said "the fumes were later brought under control" . *PTI*

PM to skip UNGA meet, to send EAM

UNITED NATIONS, 6 SEPT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not address the high-level General Debate at the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) later this month, according to a revised list of speakers.

Instead, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will speak on India's behalf on September 27. Modi was earlier scheduled to address the session on September 26.

The UNGA General Debate, running from 23 to 29 September , will be opened by Brazil, followed by the United States. President Donald Trump is set to make his first UNGA address of his second term on 23 September . This year's theme is "Better Together: 80 Years and More for Peace, Development and Human Rights."

Key events include the UN's 80th Anniversary Commemoration, a high-level Climate Summit, a dialogue on AI governance, and sessions on gender equality and youth empowerment. *—PTI*

EC plans nationwide overhaul of electoral rolls with SIR

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

The Election Commission of India (ECI) will convene a crucial meeting on September 10 to assess preparations for a nationwide special intensive revision of the electoral rolls. Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) from all states will participate in what will be the third such review since Gyanesh Kumar took charge as Chief Election Commissioner in February.

Following a pilot in Bihar, the EC now plans to roll out the revision exercise across India. The move is aimed at cleaning the voters' list, with a key focus on identifying and removing foreign illegal migrants, especially from Bangladesh and Myanmar. This revision gains urgency ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal.

House-to-house verification will be conducted, and a new declaration form has been introduced for applicants born outside the state or seeking enrolment. Those born after July 1, 1987 must provide birth documents for themselves and their parents to prove Indian citizenship.

Following a pilot in Bihar, the EC now plans to roll out the revision exercise across India *PHOTO: PTI*

The EC's measures come amid opposition criticism that the new rules may disenfranchise eligible voters, particularly in Bihar, where the 2003 electoral roll is being used as a baseline. The Supreme Court has directed the Commission to ensure no eligible citizen is excluded.

Several states have already published archival voters' lists from their last intensive revisions, dating back to 2002–2008, which will serve as cut-off references for the exercise. *—PTI*

NH2 reopened, but no free movement: Kukis

IMPHAL, 6 SEPT

Two prominent Kuki-Zo organisations, the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and the United People's Front (UPF), have sought to clarify their stance following the reopening of National Highway 2. They emphasised that this action should not be construed as an endorsement of unrestricted movement between Meitei and Kuki-Zo areas.

In a significant development, the KNO and UPF recently signed a re-negotiated Suspension of Operations agreement with the Government of India and the Government of Manipur. This agreement aims to maintain the territorial integrity of Manipur, relocate designated camps away from vulnerable areas, and foster a durable solution for peace and stability in the region. In a joint statement, the KNO and UPF declared their commitment to a structured and time-bound tripartite dialogue. They remarked, "Contrary to misinformed narratives, the Kuki-Zo never blocked the highway." *—PTI*
>>>More on Page 3

The accused is Ashwani Kumar, a native of Patna in Bihar *PHOTO: PTI*

Noida astrologer held for Mumbai terror threat

NOIDA, 6 SEPT

A Noida resident has been arrested for allegedly sending a hoax threat message to the Mumbai Police, claiming that 14 terrorists had entered the city with explosives, to frame a man who had filed a case against him and seek revenge, officials said on Saturday.

The accused, Ashwani Kumar, 51, a native of Patna in Bihar, was living in a housing society in Noida's Sector 79 for the past five years. He described himself as an astrologer and vastu expert, the officials said.

According to the officials, the message received by Mumbai Police on Thursday was traced to Noida, following which Sector 113 police swung into action and arrested Kumar within hours. *—PTI*
>>>More on Page 4

RAMLILA CARDS HONOURING ARMY TO REPLACE LORD RAM'S DEPICTIONS

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Delhi's grandest Ramlila spectacle, the Lav Kush Ramlila at the Red Fort, will feature a replica of the Somnath Temple and invitation cards dedicated to the Indian Army, Air Force, and Navy, moving away from traditional depictions of Lord Ram, Sita, and Lakshman. Ramlila Committee President Arjun Kumar stated, "We wanted to dedicate the celebrations to our heroes," explaining the choice for this year's designs.

The festivities during Navratri, observed from 22 September to 3 October, will boast a three-storey setup illuminated by over 100,000 LED lights and 3D light shows. Kumar shared that artists from various states have meticulously recreated the temple's intricate details. *—PTI*

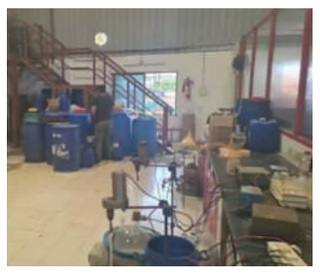
BIGGEST HAUL THIS YEAR

Rs 12K cr drugs seized in T'gana

MUMBAI, 6 SEPT

In a major crackdown on one of the largest drug syndicates in recent years, the Mira-Bhayander, Vasai-Virar (MBVV) police have uncovered a massive mephedrone manufacturing operation in Telangana, seizing narcotics valued at approximately Rs 12,000 crore.

The illegal operation was being run out of a chemical unit in the Cherlapally industrial area near Hyderabad, which was posing as a legitimate factory under the name "Waghdevi Labs". A month-long investigation involving surveillance, intelligence gathering, and infiltration led police teams to the site, where over 32,000 litres of precursor chemicals and advanced drug manufacturing equipment were seized.



Mephedrone, also known as "meow meow" or "m-cat". is a synthetic stimulant often misused for its euphoric effects. According to authorities, the cartel had been operating for several years and was supplying large quantities of the drug to Mumbai and surrounding regions.

Twelve people have been arrested so far, including the factory owner Srinivas Valotty, his associate Tanaji Pate, and a Bangladeshi woman, Fatima Murad Sheikh, who was caught earlier with Rs 24 lakh worth of the drug in Mira Road.

Officials believe the network had an interstate reach and possibly international links, prompting a wider probe. Police Commissioner Niket Kaushik described the operation as a significant blow to the illegal drug trade in India. The factory has been sealed, and additional raids are underway to identify further members of the syndicate. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

2 held for pelting stones during Ganesha habba

RAICHUR, 6 SEPT

Raichur district saw a violent outburst during a Ganesha idol immersion procession when two local men engaged in stone pelting from a nearby shop, injuring participants Vinay and Ganesh. The incident unfolded on Ganga Nivas Road, prompting onlookers to film the attack. The assailants, identified as Prashanth and Praveen, were apprehended by locals and subsequently handed over to the police. "The stone pelting was carried out due to an old rivalry," the police revealed during interrogation. The accused admitted to targeting the procession to prevent it from passing through their area, having previously clashed with the injured parties over the event. Both victims were treated at RIMS Hospital for their injuries.—*Salar News*

Girl dies by suicide after her marriage was called-off

MYSURU, 6 SEPT

A 21-year-old woman named Kavya K tragically took her own life by overdosing on sleeping pills after her engagement to a youth from Hassan was abruptly cancelled. The incident occurred in Valagere Menasa village, near Kikkeri in the KR Pet taluk of Mandya district in the State on Saturday. According to police reports, Kavya, who worked as an assistant at local Raitha Samparka Kendra, had been betrothed for just fifteen days before her fiancé called off the marriage. Overcome with sadness, she consumed an excessive amount of sleeping pills. Despite swift efforts by villagers and hospital staff to save her, Kavya tragically succumbed to her condition en route to hospital. The Kikkeri Police have registered a case and started an investigation.

—*SALAR NEWS*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

2 held for trying to run over police in Dakshina Kannada

UDUPI, 6 SEPT

Two men were arrested for allegedly trying to run over policemen who tried to stop them near the Hejamadi toll plaza in Dakshina Kannada district. Mohammad Azeem of Kaup and Mohammad Razik of Bajpe were arrested on Friday night. The incident occurred on 5 August, following which both escaped to Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The police tracked them and made the arrests when they returned to the district on 5 September. Another suspect was arrested on the spot the same day. All of them were travelling in an SUV and were carrying cattle illegally to a slaughterhouse from Gangolli to Mangaluru on the day of incident, police said. The suspects allegedly attempted to flee by ramming into officers and a patrol car, injuring two.—*PTI*

BJP moves HC against Banu's Dasara invitation

Simha asks HC to withdraw the invite, claims it is 'anti Hindu'

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

BJP leader Prathap Simha moved the Karnataka High Court on Saturday seeking a stay on the State government's invitation to International Booker Prize winner **Banu Mushtaq** to inaugurate this year's 'Mysuru Dasara'.

Mysuru district administration had on Wednesday formally invited Mushtaq despite objections from some sections, including the Opposition BJP.

Simha, a former MP from Mysuru, accused the Congress government of making a "unilateral decision" without consulting key stakeholders, including the erstwhile Mysuru royal family.

He requested the High Court to issue directions to withdraw the invitation extended to Mushtaq, citing public outrage and the potential to disrupt communal harmony.

The controversy stems from allegations that Mushtaq has made statements in the past that are perceived by some as "anti-Hindu culture".

Simha and other critics argue that her selection for the festival, which traditionally begins with Vedic rituals and floral offerings to Goddess Chamundeshwari, disrespects religious sentiments and long-standing traditions associated with the event.

Prathap Simha asked the High court to issue directions to withdraw the invitation extended to Banu Mushtaq *PHOTO: PTI*

Dasara celebration will begin in Mysuru from 22 September and culminate on Vijayadashami, which falls on 2 October.

Dasara is traditionally inaugurated on the first day by showering flowers on the idol of goddess Chamundeshwari, the presiding deity of Mysuru and its royals, amid chanting of Vedic hymns, at the premises of Chamundeshwari temple atop the Chamundi Hills in Mysuru.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah continued to defend the government's decision, saying that the BJP's actions were politically motivated. He asked why Simha had singled out this issue to raise before the judiciary, but was confident that the court would deliver a just verdict.

"Her work translated into English has won the Booker Prize. The government has felicitated writer Banu Mushtaq and translator Deepa Basti," he said at Almatti in Vijayapura district on Saturday. "However as Mushtaq is a Kannada writer, we have invited her to inaugurate Dasara festival."

—*Salar News with Agencies*

Right-wingers plan 'Chamundi Hills Chalo' march

MYSURU, 6 SEPT

Right-wing organisations announced that they are planning a large-scale Chamundi Hills Chalo agitation, with the BJP extending full support.

Members of Hindu Jagarana Vedike will take out a Chamundi Chalo Rally on 9 Sept from Kurubarahalli Sangolli Rayanna circle till Chamundi Hills, protesting against the State government's decision to invite International Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq.

The protesters demand that the government withdraw the invitation to Mushtaq.

Meanwhile, members of Dalitha Mahasabha have also planned a counter agitation by holding Chamundi Chalo rally on the same day, protesting against the communalisation and politicisation of the issue.

Dalith Mahasabha chief S Rajesh has submitted an appeal to Mysuru Police Commissioner Seema Latkar, urging the administration not to give permission for the Hindu Jagarana Vedike rally. —*Salar News*

CRIMINAL DEFAMATION CASE

Janardhan booked for linking TN MP to D'sthala case

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

Tamil Nadu Congress MP Sasikanth Senthil said he has filed a criminal defamation case against State MLA Janardhan Reddy for making allegations and linking him to the Dharmasthala case and rejected the claims as politically motivated and reckless.

Alleging that it was a "Right wing coordinated attempt" as he opposes their politics, Senthil, who had served as an IAS officer in the State in the past, including as Deputy Commissioner in Dakshina Kannada district, said that he also feels somewhere Tamil Nadu politics is being pushed in Karnataka.

Senthil asserted that he had no connection with the case and rejected the allegations.

Speaking to reporters Senthil said, "Court has taken cognisance of it. He will be served a notice. He (Reddy) will have to come and answer to the court as to on what basis allegations were made against me," he said, adding that the hearing on the case will be on 11 September.

Senthil further warned that those making stories against him in connection with the case will also face criminal action.

Reddy, who is with the BJP, had last month claimed the entire Dharmasthala case was orchestrated through Senthil.

Responding to a question, the Congress MP said, "Allegations are being made against me stating that I'm from Tamil Nadu and he (complainant) is also from Tamil Nadu. There was also a police officer here from Tamil Nadu. He is directly in opposition to me there... I don't know why his name has not come." —*PTI*

YouTuber Abhishek grilled for 3rd day; SIT summons more

YouTuber Abhishek was interrogated for the third consecutive day by the Special Investigation Team (SIT). Sources say they've extracted key details from Abhishek during questioning. The SIT had earlier issued a notice to Abhishek, summoning him based on a video he released that allegedly spread misinformation for likes and views. He appeared for questioning two days ago and, citing fears for his safety, has remained inside the SIT office since. Meanwhile, the SIT has also issued a notice to Kerala-based YouTuber Manaf, a lorry owner and frequent online commentator, who reportedly stayed at the home of one of the accused and even interviewed key figures linked to the case.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah address the press in Vijayapura district on Saturday *PHOTO: X*

CM asks farmers not to go to court

VIJAYAPURA, 6 SEPT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has appealed to farmers not to take land compensation disputes to court, warning that it will only delay the Krishna Upper Bank Project (UKP) Phase 3, which is already at a critical stage.

"A meeting will be convened within the next week in connection with the third phase of the Krishna Mala Danda Project to determine the rate for land compensation," he said after performing 'Ganga puja' and offering 'bagina' to the Krishna at Lal Bahadur Shastri reservoir (Almatti dam) with his Deputy DK Shivakumar in Vijayapura district on Saturday.

"Recently Shivakumar has discussed the issue with farmers and legislators of the region. It has now reached the stage of giving consent award," he said.

"This issue will be resolved within the next week," he asserted.

Siddaramaiah added that the dam height of the UKP would be increased from 519.6m to 524.25m, which would increase the storage capacity to 130 TMC of water.

Shivakumar said that State has lobbied the Union government multiple times to push the UKP notification forward but had been blocked by neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, as he urged farmers not to go to courts.

"Around 20,000 cases have been filed by farmers seeking additional land compensation, and they are approaching the courts. Some lawyers are also misleading the farmers," he said. "This will not yield any benefits." —*Salar News*

Social media handles booked for remarks on CM

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

A case has been registered against some media handles for allegedly making derogatory comments about Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, police said on Saturday.

The case was registered on 3 September by the cybercrime police.

Siddaramaiah was targeted on social media platforms after a video of him at the recently held diamond jubilee celebration of the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing surfaced online where he was seen asking those present, including President Droupadi Murmu, whether they know Kannada as he addressed the gathering in the language.

While the video went viral, several netizens accused the Chief Minister of being "disrespectful" and posted abusive comments targeting him. —*PTI*

Why does BJP fear paper ballots, asks CM

KOPPAL, 6 SEPT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah defended the government's decision to revert to paper ballots during local body polls instead of using the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)., and asked why the BJP was so afraid of the change.

The Congress government on Thursday decided to recommend to the State Election Commission (SEC) to hold all the future panchayat and urban local body polls in Karnataka using ballot paper, instead of EVMs.

"Have other countries that are using ballot paper gone back to the stone age? Have America and other advanced countries returned to the stone age? Why are they (BJP) afraid of ballot paper?" Siddaramaiah asked.

He was responding to the BJP comparing his government's decision to use ballot paper, to going back to "stone age".

Addressing press in Koppal, he said, "Statements that we will go back to the stone age by using ballot paper is not right."

"We are saying from our experience that a lot of injustice is happening (in polls). There are issues with the voters' list, Rahul Gandhi (Congress leader) is fighting against it in Bihar, where assembly elections are scheduled to take place. He had explained how the Congress lost in Mahadevapura assembly segment," he added. —*PTI*

Patil flays GST reforms, BJP calls Cong 'drama company'

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

State Industries Minister MB Patil launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's economic policies, particularly the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), which he claims has caused nine years of hardship for ordinary citizens.

Speaking from his residence on Saturday, Patil welcomed recent GST restructuring but accused the central government of delaying vital reforms, resulting in lasting distress. "Now... the damage is done—people have already suffered," he remarked.

While he welcomed the recent two-phase GST restructuring, Patil accused Modi's administration of delaying reforms, causing long-term distress.

Patil said during the Manmohan Singh's era, petrol cost Rs 65/litre when crude oil was Rs 140 per barrel. Today, with oil at just Rs 70 while fuel prices have doubled.

"The Modi government pocketed the savings—worth lakhs of crores—instead of helping the people," he charged.

Meanwhile, BJP MLA Mahesh Tenginkai, labelled

the Congress as a "drama company" for its response

- Patil said that during Manmohan Singh's era, petrol cost Rs 65/litre when crude oil was Rs 140 per barrel. Today, with oil at just Rs 70 while fuel prices have doubled

He asserted that all significant economic measures came from the Modi government, stating, "Whatever step (Finance Minister) Nirmala Sitharaman has taken... is entirely the responsibility of the BJP. Congress has nothing to do with it."

—*Salar News with agencies*

Man kills colleague over wife's pvt videos

MANGALURU, 6 SEPT

The Mangaluru police have arrested a construction worker from West Bengal for the cold-blooded murder of his colleague over an obscene video of the accused's wife.

The accused Laxman alias Lakhan, 30, allegedly bludgeoned his co-worker Mukesh Mandal, 27, with an iron rod after discovering that Mukesh had saved explicit videos of wife on his mobile phone.

The murder took place on 24 June, but the decomposed body wrapped in a plastic sheet was only recovered on 21 August, from a sewage treatment plant tank in Mukka, near Surathkal.

A man named Chetan filed a complaint after noticing a foul smell and suspicious signs at the under-construction site. The police filed an FIR and launched investigations.

The accused had fled immediately after the murder. The police tracked him across West Bengal and Tamil Nadu and arrested him.

Lakhan confessed to the crime. He was reportedly also involved in two more assault cases in West Bengal.

He was produced in the court and is held in police custody. —*Salar News*

'AN HONEST TELLING'

Former MP Siddiqui's memoir launched in City

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

The City witnessed the launch of veteran journalist and former MP Shahid Siddiqui's memoir 'I, Witness: India from Nehru to Narendra Modi', on Saturday. The event drew leading political and intellectual voices, blending personal anecdotes with sharp reflections on Indian politics.

The book was released by former Karnataka Speaker KR Ramesh Kumar, who lauded Siddiqui's courage, saying, "Your courage to meet people like Jagjit Singh Chauhan shows you have an extra heart—share some with us too, bhaiya."

He recalled 1967 as a turning point in Congress politics, the charisma of Indira Gandhi,

The release of 'I, Witness- India from Nehru to Narendra Modi', a memoir by Shahid Siddiqui, editor of Nai Duniya, in City on Saturday *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

and differences within the party, remarking, "Charisma is fascist, when the person becomes more important than the institution."

Author and columnist Aakar Patel praised Siddiqui as part of the most remarkable generation of editors, calling the book "entertaining, anecdotal and written with warmth that represents Indian secularism in its highest form."

Writer Sugata Srinivasraju described the work as an "anxious journal of records" that seeks to preserve political memories before they are forgotten, adding, "There is no cynicism in Siddiqui, only constructive engagement."

In his address, Siddiqui said, "I was never just a reporter; I always believed in reforms through journalism"

"Only education and hard work can save Indian Muslims today. Be better, and you will get your rights," he added. —*Salar News*

HESCOM threatens to cut Suvarna Soudha's power

BELAGAVI, 6 SEPT

The Hubballi Electricity Supplying Company (HESCOM) issued a notice to the Public Works Department (PWD), threatening to disconnect power supply to Suvarna Vidhana Soudha if its electricity bills were not paid by the end of the month.

SS Sorabad, Executive Engineer, PWD Belagavi told Salar News that HESCOM has threatened to cut the electricity to the Soudha starting 1 October. Sorabad said that the dues were pending for six months, amounting to a total of Rs 1.2 lakh.

Official sources, requesting anonymity, said that the PWD has not released a maintenance grant for a year.

The PWD is responsible for the mega administrative structure in north-Karnataka.

Notably, the 10-day legislative session in December was nearly Rs 20 lakh. However, this bill has been paid.

Sources added that the finance department rejected the department's proposal to sanction the campus and the Soudha Maintenance fund of Rs 9 crore. The proposal included Rs 2 crore annually to maintain an 18 acre garden.

PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi, who is from Belagavi district, was not available to comment on the HESCOM notice. —*Salar News*

Medical colleges now have 15% NRI quota

BENGALURU, 6 SEPT

Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil on Saturday said that the State has been granted 450 additional medical seats by the National Medical Commission (NMC) for the academic year 2025–26. This decision addresses a long-standing demand for more seats.

Besides this, the State has decided to introduce, for the first time, a 15 per cent NRI quota, earmarked for NRI with a fixed fee of Rs 25 lakh per seat, in government medical colleges.

"This will help government medical colleges become financially more self-reliant rather than depending heavily on state grants," he said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Court permits jailed MP Rashid to vote in VP poll

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

A Delhi court on Saturday allowed Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid to vote in the 9 September Vice-Presidential election. Additional Sessions Judge Chander Jit approved his plea to cast his ballot while in custody. Rashid, arrested by the NIA in 2019 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for alleged terror funding, has been lodged in Tihar Jail since then. He was earlier granted custody parole from 24 July to 4 August to attend Parliament's monsoon session. His lawyer said he must undertake to pay his own travel costs, pending a Delhi High Court appeal on recovery of several lakhs for previous travel. Rashid, who defeated Omar Abdullah in 2024, is accused of financing separatists and terror groups in Jammu and Kashmir. *—PTI*

ED summons BJP worker over RaGa's citizenship case

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Enforcement Directorate has summoned a Karnataka BJP worker who had petitioned Allahabad HC claiming that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is a British citizen, official sources said Saturday. The man, identified as S Vignesh Shishir, has been asked to depose before federal probe agency on 9 September. He has ben directed to appear with all the evidence and documents he has on the case as per the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), Enforcement Directorate (ED) sources said. A probe into these allegations is underway, they said. Under FEMA, ED probes complaints related to foreign exchange law violations by individuals and companies. When asked about matter, Congress declined to comment. *—PTI*

WB Minister surrenders in school job scam

KOLKATA, 6 SEPT

West Bengal minister Chandranath Sinha surrendered at a special Enforcement Directorate (ED) court today, as part of an investigation into alleged irregularities in primary school recruitment. Sinha, responsible for micro, small and medium enterprises and textiles, complied with court orders by appearing in person. The ED sought his custody, but the court granted him interim bail on a personal bond of Rs 10,000, subject to conditions. "He must cooperate with the investigation," an ED official stated, adding Sinha is prohibited from leaving his assembly constituency or Kolkata until further hearings. The minister was cooperating with the investigation and he surrendered in respect of the judicial process. *—PTI*

Afghan Foreign Minister's India visit cancelled

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi's planned visit to India this month has been postponed after he failed to secure a UN waiver from an existing travel ban, officials said. It would have been the first ministerial-level visit from Kabul to New Delhi since the Taliban took power in August 2021. Senior Taliban leaders remain subject to UN Security Council sanctions and must obtain exemptions for foreign travel. Asked about the proposed trip, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal did not confirm details but reaffirmed India's longstanding ties with the Afghan people and its continued engagement with Afghan authorities. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke with Muttaqi on 15 May, the highest-level contact since 2021. *—PTI*

Keeping 4 GST slabs not BJP's decision: Nirmala

Says earlier GST slabs were decided by state ministers

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday criticised Opposition parties for misleading comments on Goods and Services Tax (GST), said sources.

According to sources, the Finance Minister stated that the BJP is not in control of the four GST slabs decision, rather the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers is in charge.

On 22 September, the GST council, after its 56th meeting made approved on the two-tier structure of 5 and 18 per cent taxes along with an additional tab of 40 per cent for sin goods and luxury items, which will be in effect from Navratri, sources said.

Speaking to PTI in an interview, she said that the GST cut was a decision for people's reform, focusing on the common man, adding that the cut will be beneficial for families as well as the economy.

She also highlighted that 140 crore people will be helped by the reforms, sources said.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the GST cut was a decision that will benefit the common man *PHOTO: PTI*

Additionally, Sitharaman said that India deserves a better opposition and better opposition leaders, as she slammed their criticism of the Modi government on the GST reforms as "ill-informed" and untouched by facts leading up to the implementation of the unified indirect tax regime in 2017.

In an interview to PTI, she was unsparing in her takedown of the Congress for blaming the BJP-led NDA government for keeping four tax slabs when the GST was introduced and claiming vindication over the latest move to rationalise the structure by keeping only two slabs.

It was not the BJP's decision nor the case that then-Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was deciding upon different tax slabs or what should be the GST rate for a particular item, Sitharaman said, adding Congress ministers, too, were part of it. She launched a vigorous counterattack over its criticism of the government on the GST. *–Agencies*

> **Will the NAA (National Anti-profiteering Authority) now have a fresh lease of life? How will it be ensured that the rate cuts do not benefit only a favoured few?**
>
> -Jairam Ramesh, Congress General Secretary Communications

SAY MEITEI BODIES

'Centre, Kuki-Zo groups' pact crucial for Manipur's peace'

IMPHAL, 6 SEPT

Meitei organisation Arambai Tenggol on Saturday said the re-negotiated Suspension of Operations pact between the Centre and two Kuki-Zo groups is crucial for achieving peace in Manipur and expressed unwavering support to any government initiative aimed at restoring order and tranquillity in the state.

Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People's Front (UPF)had signed the agreement with the government on re-negotiated terms and conditions under which they agreed on maintaining territorial integrity of Manipur, relocating designated camps away from vulnerable areas and working for a solution to bring lasting peace in the state.

Arambai Tenggol said, "Our organisation has been actively cooperating and coordinating with the efforts of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the state administration to chart a positive path forward."

The outfit also called for a stringent approach towards illegal immigrants and refugees from Myanmar.

Manipur has been witnessing ethnic violence since 3 May, 2023, after a tribal solidarity march was taken out in the hill districts, in protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. 260 people have been killed.

Meanwhile, senior Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's likely visit to Manipur on 13 September should not be seen as the start on a long journey to bring peace back to the state.He said that Modi should apologise for not visiting Manipur sooner. *—PTI*

Members of Awang Sekmai Kanba Nupi Lup, Imagi Meira, and the People's Progressive Alliance Manipur stage a protest in Imphal *PHOTO: ANI*

EPS sacks Sengottaiyan from AIADMK senior posts

CHENNAI, 6 SEPT

AIADMK veteran KA Sengottaiyan was stripped of his senior posts on Saturday after publicly demanding that the party's general secretary, Edappadi K Palaniswami, take steps to readmit expelled members. A brief statement issued by the party confirmed that Sengottaiyan had been removed as state organisation secretary and Erode Rural West district secretary.

The move followed Sengottaiyan's "open talk" with the media in Erode on Friday, during which he gave Palaniswami a ten-day ultimatum to initiate a process of reconciliation and bring back leaders who had left or been expelled from the party. His comments were widely seen as a direct challenge to the current leadership and its approach to internal dissent.

Reacting to his removal, the nine-time MLA said from his farmhouse in Kullampalayam, near Gobichettipalayam, that he had not expected such a decision and described it as an "undemocratic" action. Sengottaiyan vowed to continue his efforts to reunite expelled leaders with the AIADMK despite losing his posts.

Sengottaiyan *PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA*

- The move followed Sengottaiyan's "open talk" in Erode on Friday, during which he gave Palaniswami a ten-day ultimatum to initiate a process of reconciliation and bring back leaders who had left or were expelled from the party.

Significantly, in both his press conference on Friday and his response on Saturday, Sengottaiyan avoided naming Palaniswami directly, instead referring to him simply as "the General Secretary". Party insiders say his remarks underscore the deepening divisions within the AIADMK as it attempts to consolidate ahead of future elections.

Sengottaiyan, a long-time loyalist who has held key posts in successive AIADMK governments, is regarded as one of the party's senior-most figures. His removal from office signals Palaniswami's determination to assert control and quell criticism from within the organisation. *—PTI*

CBI says Sasikala used old notes to buy sugar factory

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

VK Sasikala, a close aide of former Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalithaa, had allegedly paid Rs 450 crore in old high-denomination currency notes to buy a sugar factory during demonetisation in 2016, according to an FIR lodged by the CBI.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had registered the case on the Madras High Court's directions against Padmaadevi Sugars Limited (PSL) for allegedly causing a loss of Rs 120 crore to the Indian Overseas Bank (IOB). The account was declared fraud in 2020.

Sasikala is not named as an accused in the FIR.

The sugar factory of PSL (formerly known as SV Sugar Mills) that the bank had taken as collateral was attached by the income-tax department. The I-T department's searches in a case against Sasikala resulted in a seizure of documents and loose sheets.*—PTI*

I leave Kavitha's allegations to her wisdom: Harish Rao

HYDERABAD, 6 SEPT

BRS MLA T Harish Rao addressed allegations made against him by his cousin and former party member K Kavitha, leaving the matter to her "wisdom." Upon returning from a foreign trip, he stated, "My 25-year-long political journey is like an open book before the Telangana people," after Kavitha echoed criticisms from opposing parties.

Rao questioned her motives, saying, "Why did she make those allegations? I leave it to her wisdom." He affirmed that his commitment to the cause of Telangana statehood and its subsequent development under BRS leader K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) is well recognised.

He accused the Congress-led government under Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy of "destroying the systems" established during KCR's 10-year rule and pledged to devote his efforts to "save the state." Rao expressed intentions to work collectively with other BRS leaders to regain powers. *—PTI*

NCP MLC apologises for post against IPS officer

MUMBAI, 6 SEPT

NCP MLC Amol Mitkari, who had questioned IPS officer Anjana Krishna's educational and caste certificates based on which she cleared UPSC exam, on Saturday retracted his comments and apologised.

A row erupted when Deputy Chief Minister and NCP president Ajit Pawar rebuked Krishna, sub-divisional police officer of Karmala, and asked her to stop action against illegal soil excavation.

Pawar said he did not want to interfere but, was trying to de-escalate a tense situation. Mitkari was slammed by NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule and Congress leader Yashomati Thakur for targeting officer.

"It is my personal view. I have the highest respect for our police force and the officers who serve honestly. I completely agree with the position of the party's senior leadership," Mitkari said.

The incident occurred on 31 August when revenue department officials and Krishna reached Kapre Wasti in Solapur to take action against illegal excavation. *—PTI*

Kerala Cong's social media chief quits over 'Bidis-Bihar' post

PALAKKAD, 6 SEPT

The Congress' Kerala unit's social media head has resigned after a controversial post comparing Biharis with bidis drew criticism from political leaders across states.

VT Balram, a two-time legislator from Kerala's Thrithala constituency, resigned a day after the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee's (KPCC) official handle on X the message in the context of recently announced Goods and Services Tax (GST) changes.

The now deleted post read: "Bidis and Bihar start from B. Cannot be considered a sin anymore."

VT Balram *PHOTO: ANI*

The post referring to the GST Council's decision to reduce tax on bidis from 28 per cent to 18 per cent, while increasing rates on cigarettes, was widely interpreted as derogatory towards Bihar and its people. Bihar is among the country's leading centres of bidi production. The thriving industry employs 70 lakh workers nationwide.

Leaders of the ruling NDA in Bihar accused the Congress of insulting the state, while Congress allies, including RJD tried to distance themselves from the controversy.

The KPCC also issued an apology after the uproar that followed.

Meanwhile, KPCC President, Sunny Joseph, on Saturday admitted that there was a "mistake" and "lack of caution" while posting the "bidis and Bihar" jibe on the social media handle.

Congress did not endorse the post, Joseph said. *—Agencies*

Tamil Nadu bags Rs 15K cr European deals

CHENNAI, 6 SEPT

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday said investment commitments to the tune of Rs 15,516 crore has been secured so far during his ongoing Europe visit to attract investments to the state and asserted that the initiatives would lead to 17,613 fresh jobs.

Stalin said in a social media post: "Electrifying news from #London! UK-based Hinduja Group will invest Rs. 7,500 Cr in TN's EV ecosystem, for battery storage systems — creating 1,000+ jobs."

Providing further updates on his UK visit, Stalin said in London, he cherished a dialogue with Indian-origin students and graduates at SOAS (The School of Oriental and African studies) University of London, sharing thoughts on the Dravidian model governance, inclusive progress and the power of the youth to shape India's future.

"I then paid homage at the Thiruvalluvar statue & restored plaque, honouring Tamil culture's timeless wisdom through the immortal words of the Thirukkural."

The CM said he visited the PACT (Pluralist Agreement and Constitutional Trans formation project) exhibition on 75 years of India's Constitution, reflecting on its democratic legacy and relevance today.

Stalin said he had the privilege to visit the house of Dr BR Ambedkar in London, the residence where Babasaheb had stayed while he had pursued his higher studies at LSE. *—PTI*

'PROVOCATIVE & BLASPHEMOUS'

J&K erupts over Emblem's use in Hazratbal mosque plaque

SRINAGAR, 6 SEPT

A massive controversy is raging in Jammu and Kashmir after a plaque with the Ashoka emblem was vandalised in the Hazratbal shrine as parties on Saturday accused Waqf Board chief Darakshan Andrabi of hurting religious sentiments by using the national emblem in the mosque and demanded registration of a criminal case and her immediate removal.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, while on a tour of flood-affected areas, said the Waqf Board should apologise for the "mistake," asserting that the national emblem is meant for government functions, not religious institutions.

While parties like the NC, PDP and the CPI(M) said the use of Ashoka emblem in the mosque was "provocative" and "blasphemous", the BJP slammed the defacement of the plaque, claiming the incident was an attempt to revive "terrorism and separatism" in the Valley.

A stone plaque on the reconstruction and redevelopment of the Assari Sharief Hazratbal Shrine by the J&KWaqf Board, in Srinagar *PHOTO: ANI*

> **Google search and you will find that the National Emblem is only used in government functions**
>
> -Omar Abdullah, J&K Chief Minister

The plaque was placed inside the Hazratbal shrine, which holds a relic of Prophet Muhammad sparking outrage among devotees. *—PTI*

NDA-ally moves SC over immigrant law in Assam

GUWAHATI, 6 SEPT

The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), a constituent of the BJP-led government in Assam, on Saturday said it will approach the Supreme Court to exempt the north-eastern state from the Centre's recent directive on immigrant foreigners.

The party asserted it was in opposition to any step that goes against the spirit of the Assam Accord, including the recent order.

The Assam Accord was signed on 15 August, 1985 after a violent six-year-long anti-foreigner movement. The AGP was formed as an offshoot of the agitation.

"We have decided to file a writ petition before the Supreme Court, asking for exemption of Assam from the order," AGP vice-president and former MP Kumar Deepak Das told a press conference here.

The Centre's order, issued under the recently implemented Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, allows

Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan who entered India on or before 31 December, 2024, to stay in the country without valid travel documents, if they fled religious persecution.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, which came into effect last year amid massive protests in the state, makes similar groups who arrived in India on or before 31 December, 2014, eligible for Indian citizenship.

Asked whether the AGP will continue to be part of NDA, Das said no decision has been taken in this regard. *—PTI*

Man killed by wife's live-in partner in Kerala

KOLLAM, 6 SEPT

A 41-year-old man was stabbed to death late on Friday at Naduvathoor in Kerala's Kollam district, allegedly by his wife's live-in partner, police said. The victim, Syamsundar of Kuzhikkattu Junction, died after being attacked with a pointed weapon around 11.50pm. Police identified the accused as Dhanesh, 37, who lives near the victim's house. According to investigators, Syamsundar's wife and child had been living with Dhanesh for four years and frequent quarrels erupted between the men. Earlier on Friday evening, neighbours broke up a dispute over alleged attempts to seize Syamsundar's property. Dhanesh allegedly returned later and stabbed him during another altercation. Puthoor police have registered a murder and trespass case. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

3 minors held for stabbing boy in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Three minors were detained for allegedly stabbing a 15-year-old boy outside his school in the Paharganj area of central Delhi. The incident occurred on 4 September when a wounded boy reached the Paharganj police station with a knife lodged in his chest. He was swiftly taken to Kalawati Saran Hospital and later referred to RML Hospital, where doctors successfully removed the weapon. Investigations revealed one of the accused had been assaulted about 10-15 days prior and believed the victim had instigated the attack. Seeking revenge, he and two accomplices confronted the victim outside the school gate. One of the minors stabbed him with a knife while his associates restrained him. The accused were arrested.*—PTI*

IndiGo flight suffers tech snag, returns to Kochi

KOCHI, 6 SEPT

An Abu Dhabi-bound IndiGo flight was forced to return to Kochi in the early hours of Saturday after developing a technical fault, according to sources. Flight 6E-1403 (COK–AUH), which left Kochi at 11.10pm on Friday, remained airborne for more than two hours before landing back at around 1.44am. The aircraft was carrying over 180 passengers and six crew members. IndiGo has yet to issue an official statement on the incident. Passengers were later accommodated on another aircraft, which departed for the Abu Dhabi airport at approximately 3.30am. A fresh crew operated the replacement flight. Flight-tracking site Flightradar24 showed that the original flight was being operated by an Airbus A320neo aircraft.*—PTI*

Man pours acid on 2 minor girls in Kerala

KASARAGOD, 6 SEPT

Two minor girls were injured after acid was allegedly poured on them by the father of one in Panathadi village, northern Kerala, police said on Saturday. Rajapuram police have registered a case against Manoj KC, 48, from Karike in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada district, who has absconded. The incident occurred on 5 September at the home of Manoj's brother-in-law in Parakadavu. Manoj's 17-year-old daughter and her 10-year-old cousin were playing in the courtyard when he allegedly threw acid used for rubber processing on them before fleeing. The elder girl suffered burns to her hand and thigh; the younger sustained minor facial and hand injuries. Both are receiving treatment in a hospital. *—PTI*

Man who sent bomb threat to Mumbai cops arrested

The Noida astrologer sent threat to implicate ex-friend

NOIDA, 6 SEPT

A Noida resident has been arrested for allegedly sending a hoax threat message to the Mumbai Police, claiming that 14 terrorists had entered the city with explosives, to frame a friend, who had filed a case against him.

The accused, Ashwani Kumar, 51, a native of Patna in Bihar, was residing in a housing society in Noida's Sector 79 for the past five years. He described himself as an astrologer and vastu expert, police officials said.

The message received by Mumbai Police on 4 September was traced to Noida, following which the police here swung into action and arrested Kumar within hours.

Kumar was arrested from Sector 79 and handed over to the Mumbai Police, additional deputy commissioner of police (Noida), Sumit Shukla said.

While being interrogated by investigators, Kumar admitted that he acted out of personal vendetta. He planned the entire thing with an aim to seek revenge from him.

"He wanted to take revenge from a friend who had filed a case against him in Patna in 2023, in which he was jailed for three months. To settle scores, Kumar sent the threat message to the Mumbai Police using his (friend's) name," the officer said.

Ashwani Kumar wanted to seek revenge from his friend who had registerd a case againt him in Patna in 2023 **PHOTO: X/MumbaiPolice**

- Mumbai Police was on alert after receiving the threat message on WhatsApp which claimed that 14 terrorists had entered the city with 400 kg of RDX planted in 34 vehicles.

Mumbai Police was on alert on Thursday after receiving the threat message on WhatsApp which claimed that 14 terrorists had entered the city with 400 kg of RDX planted in 34 vehicles ahead of Anant Chaturthi celebrations, when lakhs gather across the city.

The message, sent to the traffic police's helpline, mentioned the name of a group called 'Lashkar-e-Jihadi'. A case was registered at Worli Police Station under the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. *—PTI*

11 HOSPITALISED

Brain infection claims one more life in Kerala

WAYENAD, 6 SEPT

A 45-year-old man died from amoebic meningoencephalitis, a rare and often fatal brain infection, while undergoing treatment at the Kozhikode Medical College Hospital, in Kozhikode in Kerala health officials said on Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Ratheesh, a native of Sultan Bathery in

He was also suffering from cardiac issues, they said.

As many as 11 people are now undergoing treatment at the medical college in Kozhikode with the symptoms of the disease, the officials added.

The amoebic brain fever has claimed three lives in the state in August. An eight-year-old girl of Thamarassery, a three-month-old infant from Omassery in Kozhikode and a woman of Malappuram had succumbed to the infection.

In view of the deaths, the Kerala Health department recently issued special guidelines for the treatment of amoebic meningoencephalitis, caused by free-living amoeba in contaminated waters.

The disease is primarily contracted through swimming or bathing in contaminated water. A total of 42 cases have been reported across Kerala this year.The health department is also conducting awareness campaigns in several districts. *—PTI/ Agencies*

Mob lynches WB couple after minor's body found

KOLKATA, 6 SEPT

The body of a child was found in Nischintapur area in West Bengal's Nadia district on Saturday morning, following which a mob lynched a couple for allegedly being involved in the minor's death, police said.

The mob also vandalised the property of the couple, Utpal Biswas and Sona Biswas, who were accused of killing the class 3 student, identified as Swarnabha Mondal. A jute warehouse next to the house was also set on fire.

The body of the boy, who had been missing since 5 September, was found wrapped in a tarpaulin in a pond in the locality this morning. The deceased boy's family had disputes with the dead couple. They accused the duo of murdering their minor son.

The two injured were taken to a hospital, where doctors declared them dead.

Initial probe revealed that the boy had gone to play on a ground in the area. Since he did not return home, the family members started searching for him. They lodged a complaint. .

Several police teams were deployed in the area to control the situation. *—PTI*

Sikkim to have another 'digital nomad village'

GANGTOK, 6 SEPT

Following the successful launch of India's first "digital nomad village" in Yakten, Sikkim is set to develop another hub at Gumpa Dara in Soreng.

The initiative, known as 'Nomad Sikkim', aims to enhance tourism while providing high-speed Wi-Fi and promoting eco-friendly practices. Additional District Collector DR Bista emphasised Soreng's natural attractions, stating, "This initiative would diversify the economy, create jobs, and promote sustainable tourism."

The Yakten project, developed with Sarvahitey NGO, has already begun welcoming digital nomads. *—PTI*

Centre issues rules to make products accessible for disabled

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

- The initiative, developed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities seeks to enforce "non-negotiable rules" such as universal design and clear labelling to ensure barrier-free access for persons with disabilities.

The Indian government has unveiled draft accessibility standards aimed at everyday products, including kitchenware and grooming items.

The initiative, developed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), seeks to enforce "non-negotiable rules" such as universal design, braille, tactile features, and clear labelling to ensure barrier-free access for persons with disabilities.

Anchored in the globally recognised "POUR" approach—Perceivable, Operable, Understandable, and Robust—the draft applies to 20 categories of products. It mandates features like easy-to-grip designs, accessible digital displays, and ergonomic handles.

To encourage compliance, it proposes subsidies and tax breaks for manufacturers while enforcing a strict compliance framework with potential penalties. The drive aligns with India's Accessible India Campaign and international disability rights commitments, emphasising the importance of including persons with disabilities in the design process. *—PTI*

Honeymoon case: 8 chargesheeted in Raja's murder

SHILLONG, 6 SEPT

Meghalaya Police have filed a comprehensive 790-page chargesheet against eight individuals, including Sonam, in connection with the murder of her husband, Indore businessman Raja Raghuvanshi, during their honeymoon in Sohra in May. The document, submitted to the Judicial Magistrate First Class in Sohra, is supported by substantial material evidence.

According to the police chargesheet, Raja and Sonam arrived in Shillong on 21 May, but they were reported missing on 26 May, triggering an extensive search operation. Raja's body was ultimately found on 2 June in a gorge near Wei Sawdong Falls.

Investigations revealed that Sonam had been in a relationship with Raj Kushwaha, and together with three hired assailants, Aakash Singh Rajput, Vishal Singh Chauhan, and Anand Kurmi, they conspired to murder Raja under the guise of their honeymoon. All the eight accused face charges under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. *—PTI*

Sharjeel moves SC after HC denies him bail

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Activist Sharjeel Imam on Saturday moved the Supreme Court challenging a Delhi High Court order denying him bail in an anti-terror law case linked to the alleged conspiracy behind the February 2020 riots in the national capital.

A bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Shalinder Kaur had dismissed the bail pleas of Imam, Umar Khalid, Mohd Saleem Khan, Shifa Ur Rehman, Athar Khan, Meeran Haider, Abdul Khalid Saifi and Gulfisha Fatima.

The court reserved its order on 9 July on the pleas filed in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

The prosecution had opposed the pleas saying it was not a case of spontaneous riots but a case where riots were "planned well in advance" with a "sinister motive" and "well-thought-out conspiracy".

Khalid, Imam and others were booked under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and provisions of IPC for allegedly being the "masterminds" of the February 2020 riots, which left 53 people dead and over 700 injured.

The violence erupted during the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens. *—PTI*

'Dead' man returns home after cremation

GURUGRAM, 6 SEPT

.In a bizarre case of mistaken identity, a 47-year-old labour contractor, Poojan Prasad, returned home after his family erroneously identified a severed head body as his and performed cremation rituals. The incident unfolded when Prasad went missing for a week, prompting his son, Sandeep Kumar, to file a report on 1 September.

The police had recovered the unidentified body on 28 August, leading Sandeep to identify it at the mortuary based on its injury and clothing. After the cremation at Ram Bagh, the family received a call from Rahul Prasad, their maternal uncle, indicating he had seen Poojan.

Probe is underway to identify the cremated individual, with DNA samples preserved for analysis, according to Inspector Shahid Ahmad. Police stated they cannot withhold bodies based on family identification. *—PTI*

Cargo ropeway snaps in Gujarat, 6 dead

HALOL, 6 SEPT

The incident occured while construction work was underway at the site of the ropeway in Gujarat's Panchmahal on Saturday **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Six persons died after the cable wire of a cargo ropeway snapped at the renowned Pavagadh Hill temple in Gujarat's Panchmahal district on Saturday, a police official said.

Superintendent of police Haresh Dudhat said that the incident occurred while construction work was underway at the site. A trolley carrying construction material for the ropeway came crushing down after the cable wire snapped.

Sources have confirmed the six deaths and said police personnel and fire brigade teams were at the spot to conduct rescue and relief operations. The deceased include two workers, two lift operators and two others.

The temple is situated at a height of around 800 metres, with pilgrims either choosing to climb some 2000 steps or use cable cars to reach the summit.

However, the ropeway for use by the public was shut since morning due to inclement weather, officials said. However, the cargo system was being used for construction related activities. The ropeway will be kept closed until further orders.

Pavagadh Hill rises from Champaner in three stages and its plateau lies at an altitude of 1471 feet. The hill top has a heavily patronised temple dedicated to Goddess Kali. It attracts 2.5 million visitors every year. *—PTI/Agencies*

AFTER KATHUA FLOODS

Hindu family shelters Muslim neighbours

BANI, 6 SEPT

Subash sheltered Javaid Ahmed's family in his house after their home was destroyed in the recent floods **PHOTO: PTI**

Amid the devastation caused by heavy rains in Jammu and Kashmir, a heartwarming example of communal harmony has emerged from Bani in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, where a Hindu family opened the doors of their home to shelter their Muslim neighbours who lost their house in the disaster.

Subash came forward to take home his neighbour, Javaid Ahmed, and his eight family members, including his father-in-law and two blind children, after their house was damaged in a recent flash flood.

Ahmed said they have received little help so far from anyone expect Subash. "Our home was damaged in the floods, forcing us to seek refuge. Subashji's family shifted to the upper floor to accommodate us in two rooms in the ground floor," he said.

Ahmed family was also provided with ration and other household items.

He appealed to the government to provide relief and compensation for the loss of his house.

Local MLA Rameshwar Singh said the gesture carried a powerful message. The state's true beauty was humanity and unity in adversity.

Relief-and-rehabilitation measures are being stepped up in the flood-affected areas.

Meanwhile, the water level of the Yamuna river came down to 206.47 metres at the Old Railway Bridge on Saturday after several days.

Several people were residing in relief camps in Delhi. *—PTI*

Red alert on in R'than; 2 dead in house collapse

JAIPUR, 6 SEPT

A damaged house after it collapsed in Jaipur **PHOTO: PTI**

Heavy rains lashed several parts of Rajasthan on Saturday, inundating low-lying areas, disrupting traffic, and damaging property, as a red alert was issued in four districts.

A man and his daughter were killed and five others were injured when a portion of a dilapidated house collapsed in Jaipur. A boundary wall of a school collapsed in Udaipur.

A farmer was killed after being struck by lightning in Kota.

Several areas in Bhilwara were submerged under water. Schools remained closed in Ajmer, Udaipur, Rajsamand, Bhilwara and Salumber in view of the weather conditions.

In Rajsamand's Kumbhalgarh sub-division, rains washed away part of the National Highway-162.

A red alert was issued in Udaipur, Dongarpur, Banswara and Pratapgarh districts. *—PTI*

GRAND FESTIVITIES

Rains and a bomb threat failed to dampen Mumbai's festive spirit as thousands of devotees gathered on Saturday to immerse Ganesha idols as part of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival. Amid chants of 'Ganpati Bappa Morya', clouds of gulal, and the rhythmic beats of dhol-tasha, over 2,100 idols were immersed across the city. Roads were lined with colourful rangolis as people thronged balconies, terraces, and streets to witness the vibrant visarjan processions
PHOTO: PTI

Trump's tariffs push BRICS nations to unite

US President Donald Trump has been accused of inadvertently drawing BRICS nations — a loose grouping of some of the world's fastest-growing emerging economies — closer together by imposing higher tariffs on them than on other countries.

China, the largest BRICS member, still faces the prospect of a 145 per cent tariff if it can't cut a deal with Trump, while Brazil and India have been slapped with a 50 per cent rate — half of India's penalty is for buying discounted Russian oil. South Africa was given a 30 per cent levy, and even newer members like Egypt could see their tariffs go up, due to their participation in BRICS.

Trump has repeatedly warned during the first seven months of his second term of additional punitive measures against any nation aligning with what he calls "anti-American policies" — a pointed reference to the BRICS.

Former Indian trade official Ajay Srivastava thinks BRICS nations feel "little intimidation" from being singled out for additional penalties by Trump. He said the tariffs "give BRICS a shared incentive to cut their reliance on the US, even if agendas differ."

Those additional tariffs have created a common grievance among BRICS members, who are now expanding bilateral trade agreements in national currencies to reduce dependence on the US dollar. BRICS central banks have also ramped up gold purchases, another signal of their desire to de-dollarise.

In a recent op-ed for The Washington Post, Max Boot, a foreign policy analyst at the Council on Foreign Relations think tank, said Trump was "diminishing US power by perversely uniting America's friends with our enemies" — a reference to how Brazil, South Africa and India are aligning more closely with China and Russia.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Brazil President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the BRICS summit in July, Brazail; US President Donald Trump
PHOTO:PTI

XI, MODI AND PUTIN'S UNITY

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tianjin wrapped earlier this week with a notable thaw in relations among BRICS heavyweights. Chinese President Xi Jinping, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Russian President Vladimir Putin held their first trilateral talks in six years, marking a diplomatic breakthrough after years of tensions between India and China.

Modi's visit — his first to China in seven years — was seen as a gesture of pragmatism, with all three leaders emphasising the need for multipolar cooperation. The SCO platform allowed them to align on trade, energy and regional security, laying the groundwork for deeper BRICS coordination.

That momentum now shifts to Monday's BRICS virtual summit, where Brazil's President Lula will host leaders from the Global South to discuss joint retaliation against US tariffs and expanding trade in local currencies.

Trump's tariffs have already pushed New Delhi to strengthen economic ties with China, resuming direct flights, easing visa restrictions and increasing trade discussions even before the SCO. The two countries have also held talks to resolve long-standing disputes along their almost 3,500km de facto border.

During a recent visit to India by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Beijing agreed to boost supplies of rare earth minerals to the New Delhi. China controls over 85 per cent of global rare earth processing.

Despite backing each other to host the 2026 and 2027 BRICS summits, there are several reasons to doubt a significant improvement in Sino-Indian ties longer term, given New Delhi's suspicions over China's ambitions in Asia.

China's close relations with India's Pakistan and the construction of a Chinese hydropower dam on the Tibetan Plateau has caused unease in New Delhi.

India's mistrust of China and its longstanding ties with Washington could still hurt ambitions to move the BRICS project forward. India still relies heavily on the US market and technology, with exports to the US totalling $77.5 billion in 2024, versus much lower exports to Russia and China.

Brazil also sought to boost bilateral trade with China, its largest trading partner, during a phone call earlier this month between Xi and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. China accounts for 26 per cent of Brazil's exports — double that of the US.

Similarly, more than 90 per cent of bilateral trade between Russia and China is now conducted in yuan and rubles, according to the Kremlin.

South Africa, meanwhile, remains steadfast in its BRICS commitments, signalling its intent to chart its own course despite pressure from Trump.

DIVERGENT VISIONS

Having grown from the original four to 10 members — with Saudi Arabia still undecided about joining — BRICS is, however, becoming increasingly fragmented due to diverging national interests, which could further limit its ambitions. It is also becoming more authoritarian.

Srivastava said BRICS is "less about perfect unity and more about pragmatic cooperation in trade, finance and supply chains."

Srivastava predicted that the dollar would stay "dominant for years, but parallel settlement systems in yuan, rupee and ruble will grow. This won't dethrone the dollar," he said, "but will steadily chip away at its monopoly." *—DW News*

SALAR

No Putin, transplants can't make us live forever

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping were caught at a military parade in Beijing last week discussing the possibility of using biotechnology to pursue immortality.

In particular, Putin suggested repeated organ transplants could keep a person young forever.

The idea of lifespan extension is less outlandish, and less objectionable, than it might seem. But there are several bioethical concerns.

One obvious question is where these organs would come from. Transplantable organs are a scarce medical resource. Using them to sustain the life of an ageing autocrat would deprive others of life-saving transplants.

However, Putin may have been envisaging lab-grown organs created using stem cells. This approach would not deprive others of transplants.

Unfortunately for Putin, while scientists can grow miniature "organoids" that model some aspects of human tissues, creating full-size transplantable organs remains far beyond current capabilities.

Even if, hypothetically, we had access to limitless replacement organs, ageing erodes our body's general resilience. This would make recovering from repeated transplant surgeries – which are significant operations – increasingly unlikely.

Our ageing brains present an even deeper obstacle. We can replace a kidney or a liver without any threat to our identity. But we cannot replace our brains; whoever inhabits our bodies after a brain transplant would not be us.

Scientists have prolonged the lives of laboratory animals such as monkeys, mice and fruit flies through drugs, genetic alterations, dietary changes and cellular reprogramming (which involves reverting some of the body's cells to a "younger", more primitive state).

It's always challenging to translate animal studies to humans. But nothing suggests human ageing is uniquely beyond modification.

In 2024, Putin launched a national project to combat ageing. Could Russia deliver the necessary scientific breakthrough?

Perhaps, though many experts are doubtful, given Russia's fragile research infrastructure.

But Putin is not alone in funding longevity research. Breakthroughs might come from elsewhere – including, potentially, from major investments in anti-ageing biotechnologies from billionaires in the West.

Whether they are authoritarian presidents or Silicon Valley billionaires, it's easy to sneer at wealthy elites' preoccupation with lifespan extension.

Death is the great leveller; it comes for us all. We understandably distrust those who want to rise above it.

But we need to disentangle motives and ethics. It is possible to pursue worthwhile projects for bad reasons.

For example, if a person donates to an anti-malaria charity merely to impress a Tinder date, other may roll their eyes at the motivations. But the donation itself still achieves good. The same applies to lifespan extension.

Anti-ageing research could have many benefits. Because ageing raises the risk of almost every major disease, slowing it could make people healthier at every age.

If we value preventing diseases such as heart disease, cancer and dementia, we should welcome research into slowing ageing (which could in turn help to reduce these problems).

IS SEEKING LONGER LIVES ETHICAL?

Putin and Xi might seem less concerned with improving population health than with postponing their own deaths. But is it wrong to want longevity? Since 1900, life expectancy in wealthy countries has risen by more than 30 years.

However, the most serious ethical concern about lifespan extension is that it will result in social stagnation.

People's views become increasingly rigid as they age. Young minds often bring new ideas.

If Taylor Swift is still topping the charts in 2089, many other musicians will miss out. And society will miss out on enjoying the evolution of pop music.

Music is one thing; morals are another. The 21st century is raising many new challenges – such as climate change and AI developments – that may benefit from fresh moral perspectives, and from the turnover of political power.

A Russia still ruled by Putin in 2150 will strike many as the starkest version of this worry. Fortunately, we need not be too concerned about a 200-year-old Putin. He is no longer young, and significant lifespan extension is probably decades away.

Still, the prospect of ageless autocrats should give us pause. We should welcome technologies that slow ageing and help us stay healthier for longer, while remembering that even good technologies can have bad effects.

If we succeed in dramatically extending lifespans, we will need to work out how to prevent our societies from becoming as static as some of the elites who lead them. *—PTI*

President Vladimir Putin spoke about immortality with Chinese President Xi Jinping during China'a military parade
PHOTO:PTI

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Rajasthani man gives up house to make space for classrooms

A two-room largesse by an uneducated man has allowed Jhalwar authorities to set up a school after the original building collapsed earlier in the year, killing seven students.

The grant means the owner has to live on his farm under a tarpaulin with his family of eight.

Mor Singh, who has never been to school, was so moved by the lack of a school building in his village that he lent his only house that he built with difficulty for Rs 4 lakh in 2011 with income from his daily wages.

In July, one of the classrooms of a government upper primary school in Piplodi collapsed, killing seven, and rendering 21 students injured, many of whom still under care at their homes.

His gesture meant that authorities could set up a school within 10 days of the tragedy.

Mor Singh has emerged as a hero in the mostly tribal village in Jhalawar district.

His munificence becomes grander in the light of hardship he foisted on himself, and his family, who now have to live in an uneven cottage of plastic and tarpaulin propped up on a sloped patch of his farm.

In July, with the school building in rubble, a few teachers set out asking for space to set up another school. Everyone refused.

If Mor Singh had not come up, kids would have had to be moved to another government school building about 2-3kms from the village

-Ajay Singh Rathod, Jhalwar Collector

They met Mor Singh when he was on his way back home from his two-acre farm with his nephews, Prakash and Chhotulal.

"They told me the issue and sought my house to resume the classes," Mor Singh said.

"'Kakaji, will you vacate your house for school classes?' my nephews asked me. I felt the presence of god in my heart and I instantly said, 'Yes, why not! I can vacate my house for the future of village children, at this moment, even in rain,'" he said.

He told the teachers he would only need to buy a plastic sheet and tarpaulin for Rs 500 to set up a cottage for his family.

The same day, Mor Singh moved to his farm.

The cramped cottage there houses him, his wife, Mangi bai, two sons, one in Class 12 and the other pursuing a technical course at Industrial Training Institute, two daughters, both in school, and a toddler.

Mor Singh donated his money to rebuild the upper primary school in Piplodi, Rajasthan, after in collapsed in July
PHOTO:SCREENGRAB

No one objected to the move.

Two cots, a stove, a few utensils are the only belongings Mor Singh brought to his new dwelling.

The rest were packed away at relatives' houses.

His family burns hay to keep the insects, snakes away at night.

The roof leaks in the rain. But Mor Singh is happy and content.

"Life here is hard but it is not going to last forever. We will shift to our home as soon as the school building is ready," he said.

Jhalawar Collector Ajay Singh Rathod praised the gesture of Mor Singh, now titled Bhamasha, a doner.

"If Singh had not come up, kids would have had to be moved to another government school building about 2-3kms from the village," he said.

Rathod said the state government has allotted 10 bighas of land for the construction of a new school building and sanctioned Rs 1.8 crore.

Mor Singh has been compensated with Rs 2 lakh - a lakh each for house maintenance and the help, he said.

Since the July tragedy, 10 more students have been enrolled in the school, which now has a total of 75 students, Mahesh Meena, one of the upper primary teachers at the school, said.

Eight of the students injured in the collapse are still under treatment at home.

Two more teachers have been deputed to take care of their studies at home, Meena said.

The classes in the new school building are likely to begin next year, he added.

Since the school collapse, the Rajasthan government has vowed to develop Piplodi into a 'Model Village', giving the venture tagline: 'Hamara Sankalp-Piplodi Ka Kayakalp, Hadse Se Vikas Tak.' *—PTI*

- Mor Singh, who has never been to school, was so moved by the lack of a school building in his village that he lent his only house that he built with difficulty for Rs 4 lakh in 2011 with income from his daily wages. His gesture meant that authorities could set up a school within 10 days of tragedy, where the Piplodi school collapsed earlier this year, killing seven students

PHOTO: X

US to ease travel ban on accused African leader

WASHINGTON, 5 SEPT

The Trump administration plans to grant Teodoro "Teddy" Nguema Obiang, vice president of Equatorial Guinea, a temporary waiver from US corruption sanctions, allowing him to attend a high-level UN meeting in New York and visit other cities like Miami and Los Angeles. This move has raised eyebrows, as Obiang faces allegations of corruption linked to his extravagant lifestyle, including luxury cars and mansions. Two US officials, speaking anonymously, noted the waiver aims to counter growing Chinese influence in West Africa and promote American oil interests. While easing restrictions for Obiang, the administration has tightened visa rules for numerous foreign leaders, including Palestinian officials. *—PTI*

50 die, 4M affected due to floods in Pak's Punjab

LAHORE, 6 SEPT

Floods in Pakistan's Punjab province have resulted in 50 fatalities and have affected approximately four million people since 23 August. Dire conditions have left 3,900 villages submerged, with 1.84 million people and 1.34 million animals rescued from floodwaters, according to Irfan Ali Kathia, Director General of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA). Financial assistance of PKR 1 million will be provided to families of the deceased. Sialkot and Gujrat are among the worst-hit districts, with ongoing heavy rainfall forecast. Train operations are suspended on five rail sections due to damaged tracks, and power distribution companies have suffered significant losses to infrastructure.. *—PTI*

Adams stands firm on mayoral race against Mamdani

NEW YORK, 6 SEPT

New York City Mayor Eric Adams has reaffirmed his commitment to his re-election campaign, asserting he is the only candidate capable of defeating Democratic nominee Zohran Mamdani. At Gracie Mansion, Adams declared, "I am in this race. And I am the only one who can beat Mamdani," while criticising Mamdani and former governor Andrew Cuomo as "two spoiled brats." Despite previous discussions with Trump administration figures about potential federal offers, Adams emphasised his intention to stay in the race. Meanwhile, Trump remarked that Adams' participation could aid Mamdani's victory by splitting the centrist vote. Mamdani, who recently ousted Cuomo in the Democratic primary, stated that he aims to address the affordability crisis in the city. *—PTI*

Egg thrown at Imran's sister outside Adiala jail

LAHORE, 5 SEPT

Aleema Khan, sister of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan, was struck by an egg while addressing reporters outside Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi on Friday. Footage from the scene showed the incident unfold, prompting Khan's supporters to overpower the alleged assailants, two women who were later arrested. Rawalpindi police stated the women are PTI supporters who were protesting for their unmet demands. The PTI condemned the incident as "shameful", accusing the police of assisting the women in a political setup. Balochistan National Party-Mengal chief Akhtar Mengal remarked, "Even in enmity, a woman deserves dignity," while Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal emphasised that "politics must remain a contest of ideas, not of violence or hatred." *—PTI*

Trump drops tariffs for US' trade allies

No tariffs on gold, nickel, pharma, minerals for nations 'aligned' with US from Monday

WASHINGTON, 6 SEPT

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order offering tariff exemptions to trading partners who strike deals on industrial exports such as nickel, gold and other metals, as well as pharmaceutical compounds and chemicals.

The changes will take effect on Monday.

The order identifies more than 45 categories for zero import tariffs from "aligned partners" who clinch framework pacts to cut Trump's "reciprocal" tariffs and duties imposed under the Section 232 national security statute.

Trump said his willingness to reduce tariffs depends on the "scope and economic value of a trading partner's commitments to the US in its agreement on reciprocal trade" and American national interests.

The cuts cover items that "cannot be grown, mined, or naturally produced in the US" or produced in sufficient volume to meet domestic demand.

The directive could also speed implementation of bespoke trade deals between the US and other countries, making it easier for Washington to lift tariffs on aircraft parts, generic pharmaceuticals and obscure metals and rare earth minerals.

The Changes were made on recommendations from US officials, the order said. "These modifications are necessary and appropriate to deal with the national emergency" that Trump declared when imposing his country-level tariffs in April, it added.

The order also permits tariffs to be scrapped on natural graphite, neodymium magnets, light-emitting diodes (LEDs) and eliminates previous tariff exemptions on certain plastics and polysilicon, a key component of solar panels.

Trump also signed an officially renamed the Department of Defence the Department of War. *—Agencies*

US President Donald Trump signs an executive order in the White House on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

NOW, DON CAN TARGET COUNTRIES FOR DETAINING AMERICANS

Trump signed an executive order that allows the US designate nations as state sponsors of wrongful detention, using the threat of associated sanctions, to deter Americans from being detained abroad or taken hostage. The designation, similar to the state sponsors of terrorism designation that the US already imposes on some nations, will allow the government to target countries falling under the label with penalties such as economic restrictions, curbs on visas for those involved and travel restrictions for Americans to those countries.

475 IMMIGRANTS DETAINED IN GEORGIA HYUNDAI RAID BY ICE

Immigration authorities said Friday they detained 475 people, most of them South Korean nationals, when hundreds of federal agents raided a Hyundai Motor Group site in Georgia. Steven Schrank, Homeland Security Investigations agent, said the site and was the "largest single site enforcement operation" in the agency's two-decade history and claimed there was rampant illegal hiring. The Thursday raid targeted one of Georgia's largest and most high-profile manufacturing sites, where Hyundai began manufacturing a year ago.

Trump threatens to shoot down Venezuelan aircrafts

WASHINGTON, 6 SEPT

Trump on Friday threatened to shoot down Venezuelan military jets if they pose a danger to US forces, as Washington deploys F-35 warplanes to Puerto Rico as part of the President's war on drug cartels.

The 10 aircraft will join US warships already present in the southern Caribbean as Trump steps up pressure on Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, whom the US accuses of leading a drug cartel.

On Thursday, the US Department of Defence accused Venezuela of carrying out a "highly provocative" move by sending two F-16 fighter planes to fly near the guided-missile destroyer USS Jason Dunham.

"If they do put us in a dangerous position, they'll be shot down," Trump said.

CNN also reported on Friday that the Trump administration is considering attacks on drug trafficking groups inside Venezuela.

Maduro called for the US to "abandon its plan of violent regime change in Venezuela and in all of Latin America" and resume dialogue.

The US should "respect sovereignty," he said. *—Agencies*

Zelenskyy says Putin can come to Kyiv

KYIV, 6 SEPT

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy declined Russian President Vladimir Putin's invitation for talks in Moscow, saying that he cannot visit the capital of a "terrorist". During an interview with ABC News Chief Global Affairs Correspondent Martha Raddatz on Friday, the Zelenskyy said that Putin should come to Kyiv if he genuinely wishes to hold discussions.

"He can come to Kyiv. If a person doesn't want to meet during the war, of course, he can propose something which is acceptable to me or the other. It's understandable; I can't go to Moscow when my country's under missiles, under attack, each day. I can't go to the capital of this terrorist," Zelenskyy said.

He also accused Putin of using the invitation as a political manoeuvre to delay dialogue, stating that the latter was "playing games" with the US.

Putin had earlier said that he is open to talks with Zelenskyy if the latter came to Kyiv, although he doubted that they could be meaningful.

TRUMP TO CUT FUNDING TO COUNTRIES BORDERING RUSSIA

Pentagon funding for programmes that provide training and equipment to reinforce security for European countries that share a border with Russia would be cut, a source said Friday. It wasn't clear exactly how much money would be affected and which countries would be affected.

It includes funding under Section 333 and the Baltic Security Initiative, which helps finance weapons purchases by countries on NATO's eastern flank — including of US systems — as well as ammunition, special forces training and intelligence support. *—ANI/PTI*

2 mob violence cases shake Bangladesh

DHAKA, 5 SEPT

Bangladesh experienced two alarming incidents of violence on Friday. An Islamist mob desecrated the grave of Nura Pagla, a revered Sufi dervish, by exhuming his corpse and vandalising his shrine in Rajbari district. This shocking act occurred nearly two weeks after his death and escalated into a clash between Pagla's followers and the Islamists, resulting in one fatality and over 100 injuries. Local officials reported that at least 22 individuals were injured, with four in critical condition.

In a separate incident, the central office of the Jatiya Party (JP), an ally of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League, was set on fire in Dhaka. This incident followed last week's violence when Gono Odhikar Parishad leader Nurul Haque Nur was critically injured amid clashes involving military and police forces. JP's General Secretary Rashed Khan denied allegations of involvement. *—PTI*

Israel calls for evacuation of Gaza City

DEIR AL-BALAH, 6 SEPT

Israel's army called Saturday on Palestinians in Gaza City to move to a humanitarian area it designated in the south as it expanded its operations in preparation for seizing the famine-stricken city, including targeting high-rise buildings.

Parts of the city, home to nearly 1 million people, are already considered "red zones," where evacuation orders have been issued ahead of the expected offensive.

Israel also issued warnings for two high-rises in Gaza City and the tents around them, saying Hamas had infrastructure inside or near them. It comes a day after after Israel struck another high-rise building in Gaza City.

Yet, many Palestinians in Gaza City say they won't leave.

"They only order us to leave from one town to another? What are we going to do with our children? Those who have an ill person, or an elderly or a wounded, where are we going to take them?" said a woman.

22 people were killed by Israel in Gaza on Saturday

US TALKING TO HAMAS

US President Donald Trump on Friday said that Washington is engaged in "very deep" talks with Hamas and urged the group to release all hostages currently held in Gaza.

"We are in very deep negotiation with Hamas," Trump said, warning that the situation would be "tough" if Israeli hostages remain in captivity.

"We said let them all out, right now. And much better things will happen for them but if you don't let them all out, it's going to be nasty," Trump said, adding that Hamas was "asking for some things that are fine." *—PTI*

Palestinians run for cover during an Israeli airstrike on a high-rise building in Gaza City **PHOTO: PTI**

Police clash with protestors in Serbia

NOVI SAD, 6 SEPT

Riot police armed with batons clashed with thousands of peaceful protesters in Novi Sad on Friday, using tear gas to disperse crowds demanding free elections and justice following months of demonstrations against President Aleksandar Vucic's government.

The protests, spearheaded by university students, erupted more than 10 months after a canopy collapse at a local train station killed 16 people, fuelling public outrage over alleged state corruption and negligence. "We want elections!" and "Vucic, leave!" echoed through the streets as demonstrators vowed to protect the university's autonomy.

Despite the police intervention, which included reinforcements in anti-riot vehicles, there were no immediate reports of injuries. Authorities have cracked down on supporters of the protests, with many university professors and teachers dismissed and replaced by Vucic's allies.

Vucic, who aims to steer Serbia towards the European Union, has labelled the protesters "terrorists" allegedly acting at the behest of foreign powers. He has resisted calls for snap parliamentary elections, drawing international condemnation. *—PTI*

Riot police clashed with protestors in Serbia's Novi Sad on Friday **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

- Protestors - led primarily by students - have been calling for snap elections, accusing President Aleksandar Vucic of corruption

BURYING ITS HISTORY

Iran turning 1979 revolution's mass graves into a parking lot

DUBAI, 6 SEPT

Lot 41 at Tehran's Behesht-e Zahra cemetery, believed to hold thousands of people executed after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, is being paved into a parking lot, with the bodies lying beneath the asphalt.

Images from Planet Labs PBC show the parking lot being laid over the site, where opponents of Iran's nascent theocracy and others were rapidly buried following their executions at gunpoint or by hanging. The satellite photos show the work began in earnest at the start of August.

A UN special rapporteur in 2024 described Iran's destruction of graveyards as an effort to "conceal or erase data that could serve as potential evidence to avoid legal accountability".

"Most of the graves and gravestones of dissidents were desecrated, and the trees in the section were deliberately dried out," said Shahin Nasiri, a lecturer at the University of Amsterdam. "The decision to convert this section into a parking lot fits into this broader pattern."

Nasiri said his research with others suggests there are 5,000 to 7,000 burial sites within Lot 41.

"Many survivors and family members of the victims are still searching for the graves of their loved ones," Nasiri said.

Authorities claim the parking lot would help people visit a neighbouring lot, where they plan to bury those killed in the Iran-Israel war in June.

It remains unclear whether human remains sit beneath the layer of asphalt or if Iranian authorities moved the bones of the dead there. Iran has destroyed other graveyards in recent years. *—PTI*

What was the 1979 revolution?

The 1979 Iranian Revolution was a mass uprising that overthrew Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's monarchy and ended centuries of dynastic rule. It united clerics, leftists, nationalists, and ordinary citizens against authoritarian rule, corruption, and Western influence. Led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who returned from exile, the movement toppled the Shah in February 1979 and established the Islamic Republic.

FASHION LIVES ON

Hundreds of people gathered at Milan's Armani Theatre to pay their last respects to Giorgio Armani, after his death at age 91. Armani's closed coffin was topped with a bouquet of white roses and guarded by Italy's military police in Carabinieri on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Pope launches sustainable farming and edu initiative

ROME, 5 SEPT

Pope Leo XIV introduced Borgo Laudato Si, an ambitious 55-acre initiative aimed at implementing Pope Francis' environmental teachings, during a visit to the Vatican's summer retreat in Castel Gandolfo. After touring the estate in an electric golf cart, Leo blessed the centre, which promotes sustainable farming, vocational training, and environmental education.

"The privilege of being created in the image of God comes with a great responsibility: that of caring for all other creatures," Leo said, emphasising that caring for creation is a "true vocation".

The centre features a large greenhouse reflecting the design of St Peter's Square and plans to host students and various groups to engage in organic farming and regenerative agriculture. Sustainability is central to the project, with the solar power, zero-waste policies, and smart irrigation systems in place. Avocational school will offer training for vulnerable groups, with products like Laudato Si wine and organic olive oil sold on-site to support the mission. *—PTI*

Auto firms slash car rates amid GST cut

Toyota cuts prices by up to ₹3.49 lakh, Mahindra ₹1.56 lakh, Renault ₹96,395

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Major car manufactures, Mahindra & Mahindra and Renault India on Saturday said they have reduced prices of its passenger vehicle range by up to Rs 1.56 lakh and up to Rs 96,395, respectively, with immediate effect in order to pass on GST rate cut benefit to customers.

The price cut follows the announcement of revamped GST at the 56th GST Council meeting held on 3 September, 2025, the Mumbai-based auto major said in a statement.

The revised prices for all applicable ICE portfolios are effective from 6 September, 2025, and will be transparently updated across dealerships and digital platforms, it added.

The company has reduced price of Bolero/Neo range by Rs 1.27 lakh, XUV3XO (petrol) by Rs 1.4 lakh, XUV3XO (diesel) by Rs 1.56 lakh, THAR 2WD (diesel) by Rs 1.35 lakh, THAR 4WD (diesel) by Rs 1.01 lakh and Scorpio Classic by Rs 1.01 lakh.

Additionally, Renault India on Saturday said it will reduce prices of its vehicles by up to Rs 96,395 to pass on full benefit of the recent GST rate cut to buyers.

This move significantly enhances the value proposition of Renault's renewed product line-up, including the Triber and Kiger, and is expected to drive strong momentum during the festive season, the company said.

Price of entry level Kwid will come down by up to Rs 55,095, Triber by Rs 80,195 and Kiger by up to Rs 96,395, the automaker said.

In Toyota Kirloskar Motor on Saturday said it is reducing prices of its vehicles by up to Rs 3.49 lakh to pass on the benefits of GST cut to customers.

Price of Glanza hatchback is expected to come down by up to Rs 85,300, Taisor by Rs 1.11 lakh, Rumion by Rs 48,700, Hyryder by Rs 65,400, Crysta by Rs 1.8 lakh, Hycross by Rs 1.15 lakh and Fortuner by Rs 3.49 lakh. —*PTI*

The price cut follows the announcement of revamped GST at the 56th GST Council meeting **PHOTO: PTI**

> **This one-and-a-half-year-long GST reform exercise has now been finalised... In every step, PM Modi has guided us... External factors have no role to play in this next-generation reform**
>
> - Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister of Railways of India

Agri body seeks GST relief for seeds

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Agricultural industry groups have urged the government to extend tax concessions to the seed sector after the GST Council reduced rates on fertiliser raw materials, bio-pesticides, micronutrients and farm machinery. The Federation of Seed Industry of India (FSII) said the current regime leaves seed producers at a disadvantage. Although seeds are GST-exempt, companies cannot claim input tax credit on packaging, logistics, warehousing and chemical treatments, all taxed at standard rates. This raises production costs and undermines competitiveness. FSII called for either full exemption of all seed-production inputs or inclusion of seeds under minimum GST to lower prices and ensure farmers have affordable access to quality seeds. —*PTI*

GST cut boost to 3 sectors: Report

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Global financial services firm Bernstein has forecasted that recent GST rate cuts will enhance consumption in India, particularly benefiting sectors like footwear, quick-service restaurants (QSRs), FMCG, and groacery retailers. The key surprise involves the reduction of GST on personal care products from 12 per cent, 18 per cent to 5 per cent, providing immediate pricing support for FMCG firms. The report expects grocery retailers such as DMart and quick commerce firms to gain significantly. Bernardo also noted, "QSRs do not get input tax credit, hence all GST on their inputs are expenses." The sweeping GST rationalisation comes into effect on 22 September, following a government announcement deemed a "Diwali gift for the nation." —*ANI*

PHOTO: X

AstraZeneca invests ₹176 cr for expansion of GITC

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

AstraZeneca announced a Rs 176 crore investment to enhance its Global Innovation & Technology Centre (GITC) in Chennai, marking its third investment in India over two years. This initiative aims to bolster the company's capabilities in healthcare innovation. Siva Padmanabhan, Managing Director of AstraZeneca India Pvt Ltd, stated, "This new investment reflects our ongoing mission to improve patient lives by embedding cutting-edge technologies into every aspect of our work." Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin added, "This additional investment in Chennai is a testament to the state's reputation as a centre of excellence for global innovation." The GITC focuses on AI, data analytics, and developing future-ready healthcare ecosystems. —*PTI*

Industry: India's tea research faces funding shortfall

KOLKATA, 6 SEPT

India's tea industry is facing a serious research funding shortfall, with only Rs 30 crore spent annually on crop development compared with over Rs 110 crore by China, the world's largest producer, the Tea Research Association (TRA) has warned. Speaking at TRA's annual general meeting on Friday, Chairperson Nayantara Palchoudhuri said over half of the association's member entities have not paid their dues, worsening the crisis. She urged government and major estates to increase funding to sustain vital research. proposed a committee to explore new revenue models. Despite limited funds, TRA has developed climate-resilient clones, improved pest management, IoT-based monitoring and speciality teas. —*PTI*

Anthropic to pay $1.5B settlement to authors

NEW YORK, 6 SEPT

Artificial intelligence company Anthropic has agreed to pay $1.5 billion to settle a class-action lawsuit by book authors who say the company took pirated copies of their works to train its chatbot.

The landmark settlement, if approved by a judge as soon as Monday, could mark a turning point in legal battles between AI companies and the writers, visual artists and other creative professionals who accuse them of copyright infringement.

The company has agreed to pay authors about $3,000 for each of an estimated 500,000 books covered by settlement.

"As best as we can tell, it's the largest copyright recovery ever," said Justin Nelson, a lawyer for the authors.

A trio of authors - thriller novelist Andrea Bartz and nonfiction writers Charles Graeber and Kirk Wallace Johnson - sued last year and now represent a broader group of writers and publishers whose books Anthropic downloaded to train its chatbot Claude.

A federal judge dealt the case a mixed ruling in June, finding that training AI chatbots on copyrighted books wasn't illegal but that Anthropic wrongfully acquired millions of books through pirate websites. —*PTI*

Adani to set up ₹6K cr hypro project in Bhutan

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Adani Power on Saturday announced a strategic partnership with Bhutan's state-owned Druk Green Power Corporation (DGPC) to develop the 570-megawatt Wangchhu hydroelectric project, entailing an investment of approximately Rs 6,000 crore. The project will be implemented on a Build, Own, Operate, Transfer (BOOT) model, allowing the developers to operate the facility before transferring ownership.

Power purchase and concession agreements were signed in the presence of Bhutan's Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay and Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group. With the detailed project report already completed, construction is expected to commence in the first half of 2026, with completion targeted within five years from start.

Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani with Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay during a meeting, in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

The Wangchhu project is designed as a peaking run-of-river facility, aimed at meeting Bhutan's peak winter electricity demand, when hydropower generation is typically low. During the summer months, surplus power will be exported to India, enhancing cross-border energy trade.

This venture is the first hydroelectric project under a memorandum of understanding signed in May 2025 between the Adani Group and DGPC, which envisages the joint development of 5,000 MW of hydropower capacity in Bhutan. The two parties are in ongoing discussions for further projects under this strategic partnership.

Adani Power is India's largest private thermal power producer, while DGPC is Bhutan's sole power generation utility, currently operating over 2,500 MW of capacity. The company is backed by Druk Holding & Investments, the commercial arm of the Royal Government of Bhutan. Established in 2008, DGPC has played a leading role in developing Bhutan's hydropower resources and is now expanding into solar energy as the country seeks to achieve 25,000 MW of generation capacity by 2040. —*PTI*

OpenAI rolls out feature to branch convos in ChatGPT

CALIFORNIA, 6 SEPT

OpenAI has introduced a long-awaited feature in ChatGPT that allows users to branch conversations, exploring multiple directions without losing the original thread. The update is now available to logged-in users on the web.

The feature enables users to pursue alternative discussion paths at specific points in a chat, making it easier to experiment with side prompts or different lines of conversation without affecting the main context. The update follows requests from users seeking greater flexibility in managing their chats.

The suggestion was first made by X user Micah, who explained: "Let us branch off from chats at specific points without losing the node we branched off from. Sometimes I want to pursue multiple possible branches, or a short side prompt, without muddying the original context." OpenAI confirmed the implementation, with CEO Sam Altman calling it a "very requested feature."

The new functionality is expected to enhance experiences for users engaged in brainstorming, research, or creative work.

Separately, OpenAI plans to launch a jobs platform next year connecting employers with AI-skilled workers and a certification programmer to equip staff with practical AI knowledge. The company aims to certify 10M Americans by 2030. –*Agencies*

'BIG LEAP FOR INDIA'

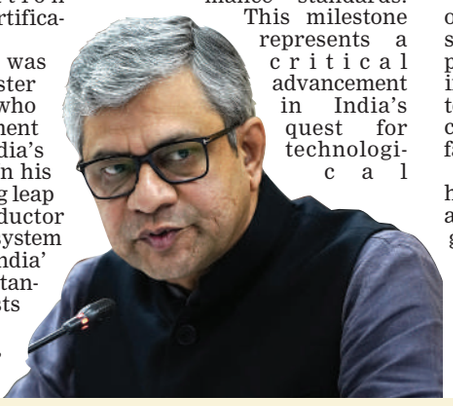
India's first telecom system receives certification: IT Minister

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

In a significant development for India's semiconductor ambitions, a telecom system powered by domestically manufactured chips has successfully obtained TEC (Telecommunication Engineering Centre) certification.

The announcement was shared by IT Minister **Ashwini Vaishnaw**, who described the achievement as a "big leap for India's semiconductor story." In his post on X, he stated, "Big leap for India's semiconductor story! First, a telecom system running on 'made in India' chips has cleared the standards & quality tests (TEC certification)."

The TEC certification, which is granted by India's Telecommunication Engineering Centre under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications, verifies that the system meets rigorous quality and performance standards. This milestone represents a critical advancement in India's quest for technological self-reliance under the 'Make in India' initiative.



It also underscores India's growing capabilities in semiconductor design and fabrication and its emerging role in the global telecom and electronics landscape.

While India is still working on establishing advanced semiconductor fabrication plants, its broader chip-making ambitions are beginning to bear fruit, focusing strategically on mature-node manufacturing.

A report by Bastion Research highlighted that India aims to address a vital gap in the global supply chain by producing essential, commonly used chips, showcasing its ability to meet global standards in capability and talent. —*ANI*

Supreet Chemicals, Turtlemint seeks IPO approval from SEBI

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

Supreet Chemicals Ltd has submitted preliminary papers to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to raise Rs 499 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). The IPO will consist solely of a fresh issue of equity shares, with no offer-for-sale component, according to the draft red herring prospectus filed on Friday. The firm plans to allocate Rs 310 crore for a greenfield project, Rs 65 crore for debt repayment, and rest for general corporate expenses.

In another development, insurtech firm Turtlemint Fintech Solutions Ltd has also filed confidential papers with Sebi for its proposed IPO. Founded in 2015, Turtlemint aims to simplify the process of purchasing and managing insurance policies. The company has engaged ICICI Securities, Jefferies India, JM Financial, and Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors as lead merchant bankers.

- In another development, insurtech firm Turtlemint Fintech Solutions Ltd has also filed confidential papers with Sebi for its proposed IPO

Both firms are seeking to capitalise on strong market conditions while addressing financial obligations and growth strategies. —*PTI*

WHAT'S BEHIND NITIN GADKARI'S PUSH FOR E20 PETROL?

The Indian government has recently been pushing for Ethanol blending into petrol, advertising it as a cleaner, more eco-friendly option for vehicles. One of the key figures behind the push Union Road Transport & Highways minister Nitin Gadkari. However, a closer look at move, shows that the push isn't driven by benevolence, but rather corporate greed:

What is ethanol blending:
E20 **means that** 20% **ethanol is blended into petrol. Made from sugarcane molasses.**

WHO IS PUSHING E20?

Nitin Gadkari.

Sarang Gadkari, Nitin's son and head of **MANAS Agro** which owns sugar factories.

Nikhil Gadkari, Nitin's son and Managing Director of CIAN Agro and Infrastructure which owns sugar factories. Together, the Gadkari family owns 17 sugar plants, which they use to supply E20 to the government.

HOW MUCH DID THEY EARN?

CIAN's revenue skyrocketed from **Rs 17cr** to **Rs 500cr** in 1 year.

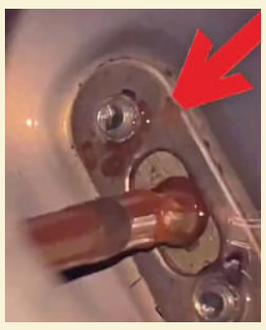
Its stock prices rose from **Rs 40** to nearly **Rs 900** in the same period.

BUT IS IT BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?

Every liter of **E20** productions requires an estimate of **2,860** liters of water.

HOW GOOD IS E20 FOR VEHICLES?

- The govt said E20 is safe for vehicles. However, users have reported that their vehicles have broken down more frequently.
- Users say that it causes a drastic drop in fuel efficiency and mileage.
- In 2021, NITI Aayog admitted E20 will cause vehicle wear & tear and 6–7% drop in mileage for 4-wheelers.
- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, however dismissed such claims. It said the impact on fuel efficiency is only marginal.



NO REDUCTION IN PRICES?

Opposition parties have raised questions over the pricing of E20 petrol. In 2018, Nitin Gadkari stated that ethanol blending would help reduce the cost of diesel to **₹50** per litre and petrol alternatives to **₹55** per litre. However, the current price of petrol ranges between **₹94** and **₹107** per litre.

> **(Ethanol is a) very good, clean fuel. It pushes the rural economy, helps farmers and reduces import bill on oil...We have done trials on old cars. In Brazil... they do 27 per cent blending but there have been no complaints (about cars breaking down). There are some people in the petroleum lobby who are spreading this.** -Nitin Gadkari, Transport Minister

Not a drop of ethanol has come from wood-based products or municipal waste as pledged, and petrol prices never touched the touted Rs 55 per litre. Instead, the common man is left paying more - vehicles guzzle more fuel, break down sooner, and each litre of ethanol guzzles a staggering 3,000 litres of water. Petrol prices have soared from Rs 71.41 in 2014 to Rs 94.77 in 2025, and diesel from Rs 55.49 to Rs 87.67, while sugar mills tied to ethanol production laugh all the way to the bank with record profits. -Pawan Khera, Congress spokesperson

Research: Siddharth Saldanha

Iyer named India's skipper for Australia A series

MUMBAI, 6 SEPT

Rahul, Siraj to play 2nd game; The trio was left out of Asia Cup sqauad

Shreyas Iyer has been named captain of the India A team for the upcoming two unofficial four-day matches against Australia A in Lucknow. Iyer, currently playing for West Zone in the Duleep Trophy semi-final, was left out of both the Asia Cup T20I squad and Test setup.

India internationals KL Rahul and Mohammed Siraj will join the squad for the second match to gain valuable match practice ahead of India's home Test series against the West Indies and South Africa. The matches will be held at the Ekana Stadium from 16–19 September and 23–26 September, respectively.

Wicketkeeper-batter Dhruv Jurel, who featured in the fifth Test against England, has been named vice-captain. Also returning is all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy, recovering from a knee injury sustained during the England tour.

Karun Nair, who missed the Maharaja Trophy due to injury, has not been selected. Tamil Nadu's N Jagadeesan, who impressed with 197 in the Duleep Trophy, also makes the squad. Mumbai spinner Tanush Kotian, Vidarbha duo Harsh Dubey and Yash Thakur, and Delhi captain Ayush Badoni (maiden call-up) feature in the 15-member team.

Dubey, who took a record 69 wickets during Vidarbha's Ranji Trophy-winning campaign, leads the spin attack along with Kotian and Rajasthan's Manav Suthar. Fast bowlers include Prasidh Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Yash Thakur, and Punjab's Gurnoor Brar, a regular net bowler for the senior team.

Australia A's squad features several Test players including Cooper Connolly, Todd Murphy, and openers Sam Konstas and Nathan McSweeney—both of whom vied for a Test spot during the last Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

India A Squad: Shreyas Iyer (capt), Dhruv Jurel (vc & wk), Abhimanyu Easwaran, N Jagadeesan (wk), Sai Sudharsan, Devdutt Padikkal, Ayush Badoni, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Harsh Dubey, Tanush Kotian, Manav Suthar, Prasidh Krishna, Khaleel Ahmed, Yash Thakur, Gurnoor Brar. —*PTI*

CISF recruits 332 athletes in record sports intake

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has completed its largest-ever sports recruitment, inducting 332 athletes, including 179 women. These recruits will form 34 new teams across disciplines such as archery, lawn tennis, badminton, and cycling. Selected from over 14,000 applicants, 75 per cent are aged 18–22, with all being national-level medallists, including 18 international gold winners. The CISF, which guards airports and vital installations, aligns this move with India's sporting ambitions, including the 2030 Commonwealth Games. Athletes were chosen over a four-month process, representing 23 states and six Union Territories. —*PTI*

PHOTO:

PHOTO: X

Babar named in training camp ahead of SA tests

LAHORE, 6 SEPT

Pakistan's leading batter Babar Azam has been named among 11 players for a red-ball training camp at the National Cricket Academy (NCA), ahead of the upcoming home Test series against South Africa. The camp will begin on Tuesday and run until 28 September, with players reporting on Monday. Interim red-ball head coach Azhar Mahmood will oversee the camp alongside NCA coaches and support staff. The squad includes Abdullah Shafique, Ali Raza, Azan Awais, Kamran Ghulam, and other promising talents. The camp aims to help players sharpen their skills and assess fitness before a demanding international and domestic red-ball season. Selected players are those not participating in the ongoing Hanif Mohammad Trophy. —*ANI*

India shines at World Wushu Championship

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT

India delivered a stellar performance at the 17th World Wushu Championship in Brazil, with three women reaching the finals and two men progressing to the knockout rounds. In the women's events, Aparna booked her spot in the 52kg final after defeating Indonesia's Tharisa Dea Florientina. She will now face Vietnam's Ngo Thi Bhuong Nga for gold. Kareena Kaushik advanced to the 60kg final with a dominant win over Brazil's Nathalia Briquesi Silva and will next face China's Xiaowei Wu.In the 75kg category, Shivani stunned Russia's Ekaterina Valchuk to secure a place in the final against Iran's Shahrbano Mansouriyaan Semiromi. —*PTI*

PSG's Dembélé injured ahead of Champions League

WROCLAW, 6 SEPT

PSG winger Ousmane Dembélé limped off with a suspected hamstring injury during France's 2-0 World Cup qualifying win over Ukraine, just 12 days before PSG's Champions League opener. The 28-year-old came on after halftime but exited within 35 minutes, clutching the back of his thigh. The injury follows a week of limited training, raising concerns for club and country. France coach Didier Deschamps appeared visibly frustrated as the extent of the injury became clear. PSG's European title defence starts on 17 September against Atalanta, followed by a high-profile clash with Dembélé's former club Barcelona on 1 October. —*PTI*

Dabrowski and Routliffe win US Open women's doubles title

NEW YORK, 6 SEPT

Erin Routliffe and Gabriela Dabrowski hold the championship trophy after winning the women's doubles final of the US Open PHOTO: PTI

Gabriela Dabrowski and Erin Routliffe captured their second US Open women's doubles title in three years on Friday, defeating top seeds Taylor Townsend and Katerina Siniakova 6-4, 6-4 in the final at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The third-seeded pair produced a composed performance to claim victory in straight sets, marking a particularly emotional triumph for Dabrowski, who has returned to the top level after undergoing treatment for breast cancer.

"Wild ride, cancer, broken ribs for both of us. It was crazy," said Dabrowski, 33. "I'm really proud of us. It was not easy."

This win also avenged their Wimbledon final loss to the same pair earlier this year. Routliffe, 30, hails from New Zealand, while Dabrowski is Canadian.

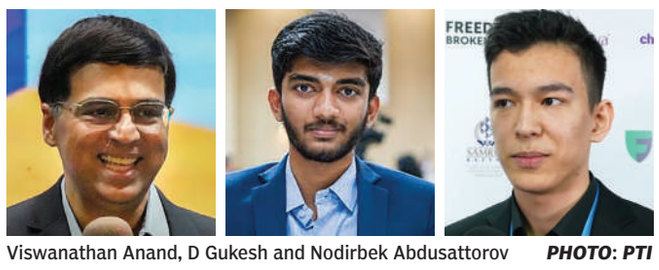
For Townsend, the loss capped an eventful fortnight. The American reached the fourth round in singles, where she failed to convert eight match points against Barbora Krejcikova, missing out on a maiden Slam singles quarter-final. Earlier, her exchange with Jelena Ostapenko became a talking point, with Townsend addressing assumptions about racial undertones. "It's really changed my life," said the 29-year-old.

Townsend and Siniakova, winners at Wimbledon and the Australian Open, had hoped to complete a hat-trick of Slam titles. En route to the final, they ended the popular wildcard run of Venus Williams and Leylah Fernandez.

Dabrowski and Routliffe split the $1 million winner's prize, matching the men's doubles purse. The men's final will see Marcel Granollers and Horacio Zeballos take on Joe Salisbury and Neal Skupski. —*PTI*

Anand downplays Nodirbek's dig at Gukesh

NEW DELHI, 6 SEPT



Viswanathan Anand, D Gukesh and Nodirbek Abdusattorov PHOTO: PTI

Grandmaster Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan stirred the chess world recently with a bold claim about reigning world champion Dommaraju Gukesh, predicting that the 19-year-old Indian would lose his title in his very first defence next year.

"Gukesh will lose his title in the next match. Is that controversial?" Nodirbek quipped, when asked to share an unpopular chess opinion ahead of the FIDE Grand Swiss in Samarkand.

The remark quickly gained traction in the global chess community and was brought to the attention of Indian legend Viswanathan Anand — a five-time world champion and mentor to Gukesh.

Anand, however, chose not to escalate the matter, calling Nodirbek's comment "good fun".

Gukesh himself maintained composure. "Nodirbek is a great player and capable. But at this tournament, he's only trying to qualify for the Candidates — it's one more step toward becoming world champion," he said. "I'm not rooting for anyone. I just do my part as a researcher," Gukesh added.

Abdusattorov is vying for a spot at the 2026 Candidates Tournament alongside top contenders like Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi, Alireza Firouzja, and Ian Nepomniachtchi. Gukesh, already qualified, is using the tournament to test himself across formats. —*Agencies*

BCCI to elect new president on 28 Sept

MUMBAI, 6 SEPT

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will elect its new President and Indian Premier League (IPL) Chairman during its Annual General Meeting (AGM) scheduled for 28 September.

The BCCI president's post became vacant following the exit of Roger Binny, who stepped down earlier this month upon turning 70. As per BCCI's constitution, no official can remain in office beyond the age of 70. Binny had been appointed in October 2022.

Current IPL Chairman Arun Dhumal is also expected to step aside due to the mandatory cooling-off period after completing six years in administrative roles.

Although elections are scheduled for all top posts, most officials are likely to retain their positions. Devajit Saikia, unanimously elected secretary in January after Jay Shah took over as ICC Chairman, is expected to continue. Rohan Gauns Desai (joint secretary) and Prabhtej Bhatia (treasurer) — both elected earlier this year — are also likely to remain.

The AGM agenda includes electing a representative from the general body and inducting two Indian Cricketers' Association representatives into the apex council.

The meeting will also appoint the BCCI's ombudsman, ethics officer, and ICC representative.

The AGM date was formally confirmed in a communication sent to state associations on Saturday. —*PTI*

Nafees clinches U-19 titles at Indian Open Squash

JAIPUR, 6 SEPT

Yusha Nafees and Rudra Singh claimed the boys' and girls' under-19 titles respectively at the Indian Junior Open Squash Championships, held at the Rajasthan Squash Academy on Saturday.

Nafees overcame Rachit Shah in a five-game thriller: **8-11, 5-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-2**. In the girls' U-19 final, Rudra Singh beat Vyomika Khandelwal in straight games: **11-7, 13-11, 11-2.**

The week-long tournament featured 520 entries across 12 age-group events, concluding with finals across all categories.

OTHER WINNERS INCLUDED:

- Boys U-17: Subhash Choudhary bt Raghav Vashishtha **11-8, 11-4, 10-12, 11-2**
- Girls U-17: Sehar Nayar bt Saanvi Kalanki **12-10, 11-1, 11-6**
- Boys U-15: Shreyansh Jha bt Harshal Rana **14-12, 11-5, 11-8**
- Girls U-15: Aadya Budhia bt Vasundhara Nangare **12-10, 11-7, 10-12, 11-7**
- Boys U-13: Shayan Samtani bt Abhyuday Arora **11-5, 11-2, 12-10**
- Girls U-13: Shanaya Parasrampuria bt Nandikasree Kalaivanan **11-7, 11-7, 11-6**
- Boys U-11: K Haribala bt Tilakvir Kapoor **11-9, 12-10, 8-11, 6-11, 11-9**
- Girls U-11: Alia Kankaria bt Keerti Pradha Junivar Bala **10-12, 11-8, 11-9, 16-14**
- Boys U-9: Amaay Mahajan bt Darsh Mehrotra **13-11, 11-6, 11-6**

—*PTI*

Inter Miami's Suárez banned for 6 matches

FORT LAUDERDALE, 6 SEPT

Inter Miami forward Luis Suárez has been handed a six-match ban from future Leagues Cup matches following a spitting incident after Sunday's 3-0 final loss to the Seattle Sounders. The suspension means Suárez will miss next season's tournament and potentially future editions, though it does not apply to Major League Soccer (MLS) games, where further sanctions may follow.

The ban also affects other involved parties: Sounders coaching staff member Steven Lenhart received five matches, Inter Miami's Tomás Avilés three, and Sergio Busquets two. Suárez, notorious for past controversies including biting opponents and a deliberate handball in the 2010 World Cup, appeared to spit at a Seattle staff member and grabbed a player by the neck during the postgame melee. —*PTI*

US OPEN

Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz PHOTO: PTI

Sinner to face Alcaraz in 3rd straight grand slam

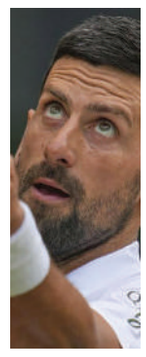
NEW YORK, 6 SEPT

Top seed Jannik Sinner defeated Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-1, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the US Open semi-finals on Friday, setting up a blockbuster final with second seed Carlos Alcaraz — their third consecutive Grand Slam final meeting this season.

Sinner, who took a medical timeout for an abdominal issue in the second set, regained control to seal his 33rd win in 34 Slam matches. "After treatment, I was serving back at normal pace — nothing to worry about," said the 24-year-old Italian. He now aims to become the first man since Roger Federer (2004–08) to retain the US Open title.

Earlier, Alcaraz swept past Novak Djokovic 6-4, 7-6(4), 6-2 to reach his sixth major final, extending his 2025 hard-court unbeaten run. "I'm just getting more consistent and mature," said the 22-year-old Spaniard, who hasn't dropped a set in the tournament. Alcaraz now holds a 6–1 head-to-head advantage over Sinner in 2024.

> **I'm not giving up on Grand Slams. ... I'm going to continue fighting and trying to get to the finals and fight for another trophy, at least**
>
> -Novak Djokovic



Their rivalry marks the first time in men's tennis history that the same two players will contest three straight Slam finals in a single season. Sinner won at Wimbledon; Alcaraz triumphed at Roland Garros.

The US Open final will also determine the new world No. 1. President Donald Trump is expected to attend.

Djokovic, 38, admitted he was "gassed out," and hinted at a reduced schedule, focusing mainly on Grand Slams next year. —*PTI*

Aryan Sabalenka, of Belarus, reacts after defeating Jessica Pegula, of the US , during the women's singles semifinals of the US Open tennis Championships PHOTO: PTI

SABALENKA FACES ANISIMOVA IN US OPEN FINAL REMATCH

NEW YORK, 6 SEPT:

World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka will bid for her fourth Grand Slam title, and second consecutive US Open crown, when she faces American Amanda Anisimova in Saturday's final at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The 27-year-old Belarusian is playing her third major final of 2025, having lost to Madison Keys at the Australian Open and Coco Gauff at the French Open. Sabalenka defeated Jessica Pegula in last year's US Open final and now aims to become the first woman since Serena Williams (2012–14) to win back-to-back titles in New York.

However, Sabalenka trails Anisimova 3-6 in their head-to-head. Anisimova, 24, beat her in this year's Wimbledon semi-finals before losing 6-0, 6-0 to Iga Swiatek in her maiden Slam final.

The American, born in New Jersey and raised in Florida, bounced back by defeating Swiatek in the US Open quarter-finals, then ousted four-time major winner Naomi Osaka in the semis.

A former junior champion in New York (2017), Anisimova reached the French Open semis at 17, but took a break in 2023 due to burnout. Ranked outside the top 350 upon her return, her run to the Wimbledon final pushed her into the top 10. She is seeded No. 8 this week. —*PTI*

A WINNING START

Mbappé's France beats Ukraine to start World Cup qualifier

France's Kylian Mbappe, center, in action during the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying soccer match between Ukraine and France at Tarczynski Arena in Wroclaw, Poland PHOTO: PTI

GENEVA, 6 SEPT

Kylian Mbappé returned to World Cup qualifying with a goal as France beat Ukraine 2-0 in neutral Poland to kick off their 2026 World Cup campaign. This was France's and Mbappé's first qualifier since the 2022 final loss to Argentina.

Michael Olise opened the scoring in the 10th minute before Mbappé sealed the win in the 82nd, outpacing Ukraine defender Illia Zabarnyi. "We had a lot to lose so it's good to start with a victory," said France coach Didier Deschamps. Iceland also began strongly, thrashing Azerbaijan 5-0 ahead of their match against France in Paris on Tuesday.

Italy, seeking to end their World Cup absence since 2014, edged Estonia 2-0 under new coach Gennaro Gattuso. Moise Kean's 58th-minute header broke the deadlock, with Mateo Retegui adding a late second. Italy face Israel on Monday, while group leaders Norway remain unbeaten.

Switzerland dominated Kosovo 4-0, with Breel Embolo shining, and Greece defeated Belarus 5-1, highlighted by 17-year-old Kostas Karetsas scoring in under three minutes. Sweden and Slovenia played out a dramatic 2-2 draw.

- Ukraine staged their home match in Poland due to security concerns amid the conflict with Russia. France survived a tense spell, with goalkeeper Ibrahima Konaté clearing a crucial header.

Mbappé's goal marked his 51st for France, equalling Thierry Henry's tally in fewer games. He aims to surpass Henry's record soon.

Ukraine staged their home match in Poland due to security concerns amid the ongoing conflict with Russia. France survived a tense spell mid-second half, with goalkeeper Ibrahima Konaté clearing a crucial header.

Only group winners qualify directly for the 2026 World Cup; runners-up enter play-offs next March. —*PTI*